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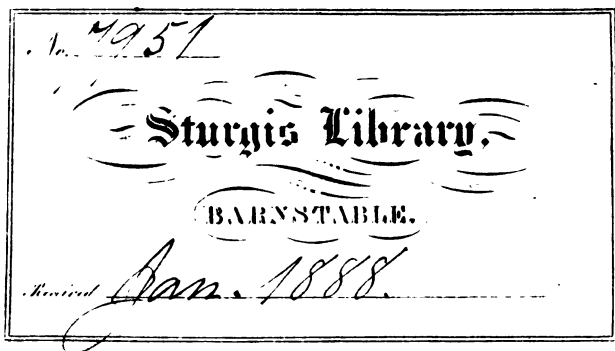
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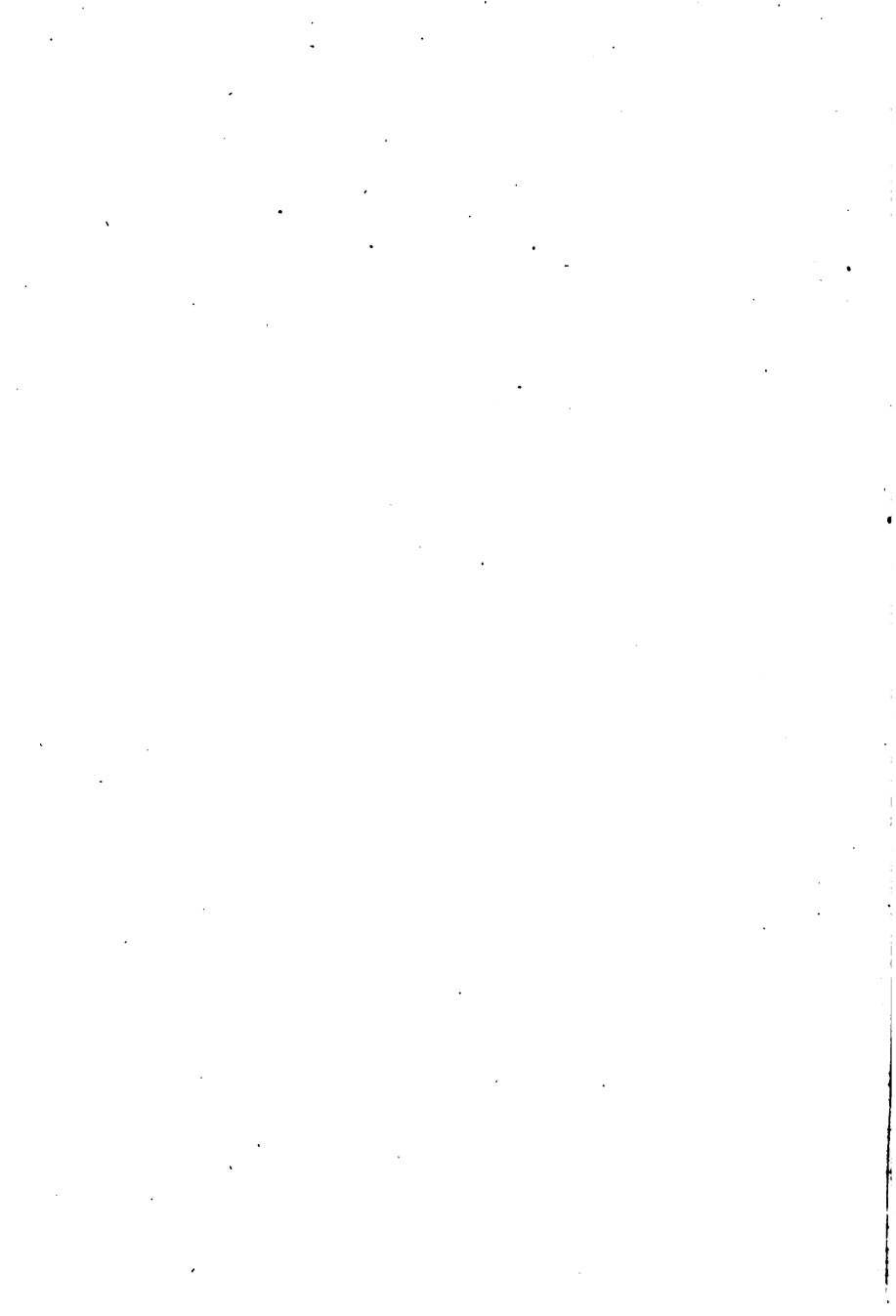
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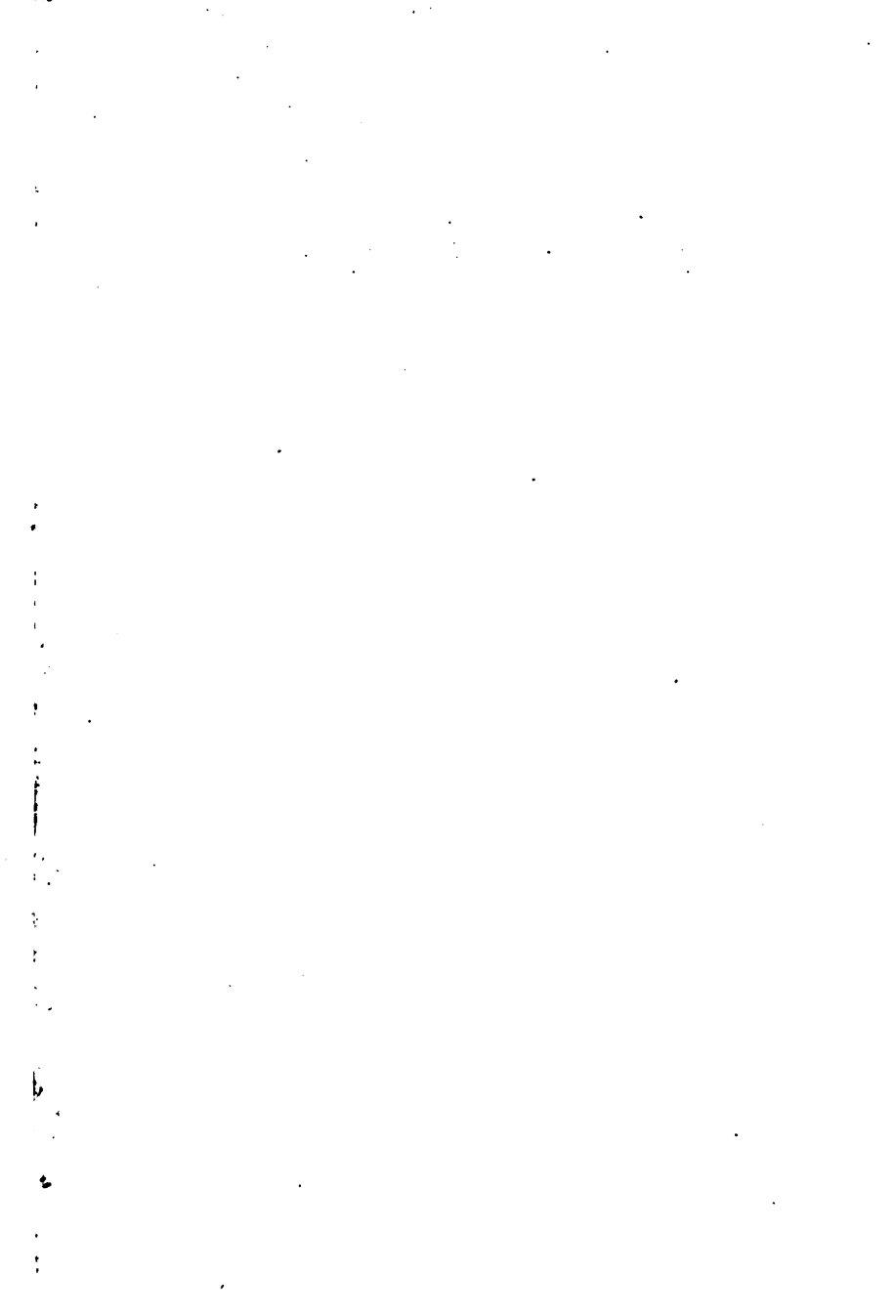
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BY

ANNIE ARMITT.

AUTHOR OF

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THIEVES," ETC.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

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## CONTENTS.

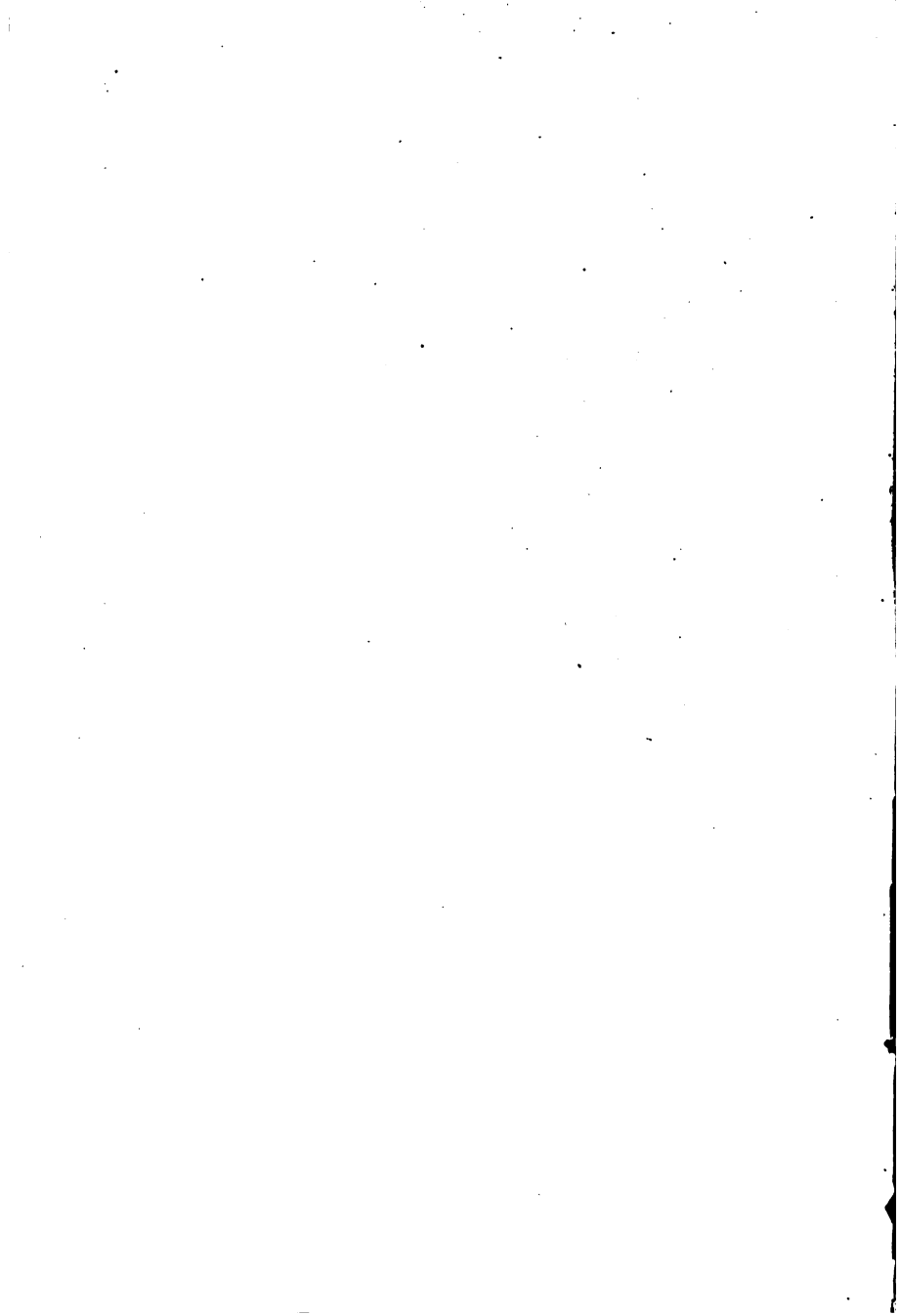
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CHAP.	PAGE
X.—A WELCOME AND GOOD-BYE . . . .	1
XI.—LITTLE KATIE . . . . .	11

### Part Three.

#### FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

I.—UNDER THE ELMDALE TREES . . . .	27
II.—THE FIRST MEETING . . . . .	45
III.—THE SECOND TIME . . . . .	63
IV.—NIECE AND DAUGHTER . . . . .	75
V.—A BROKEN BRIDGE . . . . .	88
VI.—A LONELY OLD AGE . . . . .	107
VII.—“ENOUGH FOR A LIFETIME” . . . .	121
VIII.—A REVELATION . . . . .	134
IX.—REPENTANCE . . . . .	150
X.—ON THE HEIGHTS OF CRINKLE FELL . .	163
XI.—WHAT THE NIGHT BROUGHT . . . .	177
XII.—SUPPLEMENTARY . . . . .	199



# IN SHALLOW WATERS.

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## CHAPTER X.

### A WELCOME AND GOOD-BYE.

WHEN Henry Dilworth reached the Stepping Stones the low light of the afternoon sun was gleaming over the hill-tops, and sending far the shadow of the trees. The years since he had last visited the place had changed it little; the very same water seemed to be slipping over the very same stones, the tufts of fern on the banks, the groups of trees on the hillocks, were just what they used to be.

But a little child was playing in the front garden, a child with dark hair and shining dark eyes. She came into the road to watch him cross the river, and as he ap-

proached her she said, in a clear little imperious voice, "I should like to cross by the stones. Carry me over."

It had occurred to her intelligent mind that a stranger might be induced to satisfy an old ambition of hers—weeks old—to be carried over the stepping-stones. Miss Leake had forbidden her nurse to gratify this reasonable desire ; but this man, whom she had never seen before, couldn't be aware of the troublesome fact, and would probably do as he was told without asking inconvenient questions.

When, however, she spoke to Henry Dilworth, a flood of mingled wonder and recognition swept over his brain. Could this be his own child—the little girl he had thought of, and longed to see? She was such a child as any father might be proud of, and yet not perhaps the child of his imagination.

He took her up in his arms and looked at her silently. For a moment she made no objection, but looked back

at him with composure, expecting a reply. When she thought she had waited long enough, she repeated, with some impatience and more imperiousness, "Carry me over."

"To-morrow, perhaps, little one; not now."

She became angry at once, when she found that he had taken the liberty of lifting her up without intending to carry out her wishes, and her anger took the form of dignified reserve, rather amusing in so young a child.

"Put me down; I don't like you," she said concisely.

"Is your name Katie? Katie Dilworth?" he asked her, holding her still in his arms.

But her anger grew into passion at his persistence.

"Put me down. You are a rude man. I shall tell Aunt Susie. *Allez-vous-en*," she said, breaking into her old nurse's language in her excitement, and struggling to free herself from his grasp.



"Give me a kiss first," he answered, with characteristic gentleness.

"No. You are ugly. You are big. You are rude. *Je ne vous aime pas. Allez vous-en.*" And she struck at his face in her anger with her soft little palms.

The foreign words hurled at him by those infantile lips hurt him more than the blow she tried to give him in her childish passion. Already it seemed that she was educated out of his world; she spoke to him in a language he could not understand, and recognized him as some one to whom she might be impertinent with impunity. Nevertheless there was something pleasant in the sensation of being kicked at by the little feet whose existence he had never fully realized until now.

He put her down on the ground, hoping to soothe her, and to work his way into her confidence more gradually than he had first attempted to do. But she gave him no further opportunity; as soon as she found herself at liberty she fled through the garden

into the house. He followed her, entering as she had done, by the open door, and he was witness of her breathless entrance into the drawing-room.

“Aunt Susie, there is a man in the garden, a very big man, and he wanted to kiss me, and—there he is!”

Agnes had been lying on the couch with her eyes shut, but she opened them eagerly at the child's first words. Now she sprang to her feet, her eyes fixed expectantly on the doorway, and the colour coming and going in her worn cheeks.

Her husband, when he first saw her, hardly knew whether the change in her looks was one of sickness or health; her cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright, her weakness was masked by momentary excitement.

He looked at no one else, but put out his hands towards her with a rare bright smile of tender recognition.

She uttered a low cry, and went forward to meet him.

"Henry!" she said; "at last! Oh, how long it is!" And then, to the consternation of her sisters, she fainted away in his arms.

The sadness of this late reunion was more evident than its happiness. There would be no more parting between the husband and wife before the last one—because that was so near. No one would struggle again to wean Agnes from Henry Dilworth's influence, because Death had claimed her, and sisters and husband alike must yield her to him.

Agnes herself knew it, as soon as the first joyful excitement was over.

"It is too late; you cannot save me this time, dearest," she said, addressing him by a tenderer term than she had ever used before. "You have come so very far only to say good-bye."

"More than that," he said; "to look at you, to be with you, to help you if I can."

"Yes," she sighed, speaking low in her weakness. "It would have been hard to

die without you, now, when I am your wife. Even on the island you promised to be with me if I died."

"I am glad you sent for me, very glad." It was all he said; he uttered no regrets to her, and no reproach to any one else. There was no time to waste in anger or repining. He wanted to keep her with him for a little longer, to have a few days of love and reconciliation, which he might remember when the end had come; but even this respite was not granted to him. He was not permitted to look with her upon the dawning of another day.

Late that night Katie was carried to her mother, and told to kiss her as she lay in bed propped up by pillows, breathing with difficulty. The strange man sat by the bedside, and had hardly a word or look for the child, who gazed at the whole scene with awed and wondering eyes. What was his daughter to him at this moment, when her mother and his wife lay dying in his sight?

"I am not so much afraid now—as I

was—the first time,” Agnes murmured to him afterwards, as he sat beside her, listening to the broken confidences which she tried to give from time to time. “Life is so sad. I didn’t know. I never would believe it. But oh! how I wanted you—dear! And you were so far away. It was no use speaking.”

“You should have written. I wanted to come—always.”

“It would have been no use. I shouldn’t have gone with you. They wouldn’t have let me. And perhaps—I didn’t want. I don’t know. I never could find out. And Susie was always quite sure. But I am glad you came. I want you—now. No one else would do. Susie is kind; but she is not—like you. You will not leave me any more.”

“No more, dear child, no more.”

“Susie is not like you,” she repeated; “she believes in good things when she wants. But you believe—always. That makes them seem real. You are so good.

You never said what you didn't think true. I don't mean Susie did. I don't know what I mean. Does it matter? What I mean is that I am not afraid, not so much afraid, when you are here. I knew it would be so. That was why I wanted you to come."

Later on she revived a little, and turned again to the thought of life.

"Why am I to die? I am so young. I ought to have been happy. I meant to be. I thought when I married you it would be right for us both."

Then, as her weakness increased, her mind went back to the island, and she thought she was on its desolate cliffs once more.

"Are you there, Mr. Dilworth?" she murmured. "No ship will come to save me now. It is too late. I have dreamt that I was at home again, and that we were—Ah, it is true we were married, is it not? And you went away. I never knew why. Susie said—Perhaps,"

she broke off with a flicker of light shining in on her troubled thoughts, "you were my ship—and I should have gone with you. But now—I must sail away—alone."

Before the morning dawned, the dreaded hour had passed; the little bark had drifted from the shores of life, and was lost to sight and speech in the dim solitudes of death.



## CHAPTER XI.

### LITTLE KATIE.

It was the afternoon of the funeral day. Agnes Dilworth had been laid in that grave where she had longed to rest when death seemed near her on the island. Her husband had stood in the familiar place, while the sun shone, and not far off the river ran with the murmurous sound she had loved and remembered.

Her little part in life's tragedy was over. Somehow she had failed to make the best of it for herself and for others. Perhaps she had never had a fair chance; the opportunity of happiness offered to her was on a scale beyond her comprehension, on a level outside her reach. At any rate, she had never grasped it; and now, in the bright world, where she had desired so much to be



always comfortable, nothing was left of her but a melancholy memory.

And of Henry Dilworth's marriage nothing was left but disappointment and a wounded heart—except, indeed, a little child. His wife's love had failed him, his home had remained a lonely place, the rights of his position had been denied to him, and of all the hopes of the past nothing was left to him: he must return to the solitary uncared-for life he had led so long.

But there was little Katie. His power over her was absolute, his right in her complete. It might be, indeed, that a new blossom of affection was destined to flower where the tree of love had been broken abruptly off near the roots, and that this young life, so ignorant of evil, so innocent of prejudice, might atone for the disappointment of the past, and be a solace and a satisfaction to Henry Dilworth's later life.

Miss Leake had thought of the child often during the past week; her trouble for her sister's death was mingled with anxiety for

her niece's future. The death of Agnes seemed to have destroyed her own right to little Katie, yet she could not endure the thought of giving her up to her father.

The consciousness of her own weak claim made her less than just to Henry Dilworth. She felt that his coming had already brought trouble, and that absence was the only quality she could tolerate in him. She could not reproach him for his return to his wife, after so many years of absence, though she felt that the shock of his arrival—joyful as it evidently was—had hastened her sister's end. On the other hand, she made no apology for having left him in ignorance of his wife's increasing illness; for she had been herself unaware of its seriousness. Agnes was always ailing, always weakly, and many false alarms had lulled her sisters to a false security. Miss Leake fancied, from the sombre silence of Henry Dilworth, that he was inclined to blame her—unjustly, as she considered. But in this she was mistaken.

He blamed no one—not Agnes, nor her friends, nor himself. If their love had not been strong enough to nullify outward influences, he could not be angry at those influences for existing.

It was true that among the possible drawbacks of his marriage with Agnes he had not thought of her desertion, nor of her family's polite, but most intolerable, tolerance of him. He had looked forward to vexations for which their love would be a compensation, troubles which their mutual confidence would help them to face; but he had not imagined his wife slipping out of the situation, and leaving him in a position where he had some of the duties, but none of the privileges, of a husband.

Nevertheless, he had accepted this unthought-of development also in silence. It was impossible for him to make demands, to act with selfishness. He had not begun the connection on this footing, and he could not nullify his own generous desire by putting forward as an obnoxious claim what

he had regarded only as a reasonable hope.

And now all possibility of a reunion with his wife and a happy married life was over; but there yet remained to him his little child, and half of her nature was his own.

He had hardly seen her during the days before the funeral. When that event was over, when the blinds were drawn up again, and Miss Leake put away her handkerchief with a feeling that the past had had its share for the moment, and that the future must be faced, Henry Dilworth asked that his child might be brought to him.

She came, carefully dressed in her new black frock, with a serious face and large eyes fixed in infantine resolve. She had heard many strange things in the last few days, and had meditated on them in childish fashion. No one had asked her opinion of recent events, but she had formed a decided one. The coming of the big man had brought trouble; her pretty mamma had died—all through that coming, the nurse

said—and now nurse said also that the big man would take her away with him to a dreadful country—“poor little dear!”

She was resolved not to go—at any rate if tears, insolence, and kicks could keep her at home—and she was prepared to act accordingly. She knew now that the big man was no impostor—as she had been at first inclined to regard him—but her actual father; that made no difference, however. Her aunt had never wanted him to come, so nurse said, and *she* didn't want him either; her pretty mamma had refused to go to the dreadful country with him, so nurse said also, and *she* wouldn't go either.

All these interesting family disclosures had not been made by the nurse directly to the child, but to a fellow-servant; and the child had been supposed not to understand, or to forget immediately—as children are always supposed to do until they are old enough actually to join in the conversation and prove their intelligent comprehension.

So little Katie Dilworth walked in that afternoon, very innocent in appearance, but really a small explosive, primed to go off at the right moment.

Henry Dilworth's gloomy look brightened, and his heart softened at the sight of the child.

"Come to me, little one," he said, putting out his hands encouragingly, "and let us get to know each other."

She went forward obediently, with a side glance at Aunt Susie, whose presence she would have preferred to dispense with. She was not afraid of the "big man;" she had her mother's instinct of confidence in the right people; only she didn't like him, and intended to tell him to go away. Surely he would be as easy to deal with as the impertinent plumber.

He lifted her on his knee, where she sat with prim stiffness, and he said to her gently: "Give me a kiss, Katie."

She looked at him for a moment side-long, as if to see how he might be expected

to take her reply; then she answered in a little voice of decision: "Thank you; I don't want to. I don't like you."

A flush of painful surprise passed over her father's face; Miss Leake rose with a protesting "Katie," but Henry Dilworth glanced at her with a look which made her sit down again in silence. She saw that he could endure no interference at the moment.

"Why don't you like me, Katie?" he asked quietly.

She glanced at him again, to see how far his quietness might be trusted, and decided that he would be *quite* as easy to deal with as the plumber.

"You are not—nice." Here her childish eyes wandered over him observantly, trying to find a reason. He was not badly dressed, like the plumber, certainly, but reasons were not wanting. "You are—rough. *Regardez donc vos mains*. Your *hands*, you know," as she saw him look perplexed. Then with a

little air of successful impertinence, "If he's my papa, why can't he speak French, Aunt Susie?"

There was a moment's silence. Henry Dilworth put the child on the ground, and rose to his feet.

"Miss Leake," he said, not without dignity, "is this the way you are training my daughter to love me?"

Miss Leake felt that he had the advantage. She was in the wrong, at least her side was in the wrong, obviously, unjustly, vulgarly even. She began to apologize.

"I cannot understand it. I never heard the child speak so. She has been left so much to the servants for the last few days—unavoidably. That must be the reason."

"And this is the result of your servants' opinion of me?"

It was Miss Leake's turn to flush painfully.

"I cannot tell. I have no reason to think so. Katie," she said sharply, glad to



escape from her embarrassment by reproving the child, "go to your father at once, and tell him that you are sorry."

"No, no, no," said Henry Dilworth softly; "she must not be scolded into love of me."

"She must be made to do what is right. Katie, come here. I am ashamed of you."

But the child stood still, looking in perplexity and growing excitement from one to the other. This was not so simple as the plumber's affair after all.

"Tell me, Katie," asked her father gently, "is that the only reason you don't like me—because I am rough?"

At this point Katie's excitement and fear that she was going to be punished overcame her. She burst into tears and sobbed out: "You want to take me away, nurse says, and I don't want to go. And mamma didn't want to go; and you made her ill; and you made her die; and I won't go. Aunt Susie, don't let him take

me!" And she threw herself weeping into the arms of her embarrassed, but not altogether displeased, aunt.

"Poor child! she is fond of us all; and is afraid of strangers."

"Not afraid, I think," her father answered with a strange smile; "she seems to have courage enough—but I would rather have seen a little affection this afternoon."

"That will come in time."

"If she stays here?"

She looked up at him quickly.

"Will you leave her with us, then?"

"To learn to dislike me? perhaps to despise me?"

"That would be impossible when she learns to understand. No one here does *that*," said Miss Leake, recovering herself. "This is the nurse's fault—a new girl, who shall be sent away at once."

"Don't you think it is the fault of the —atmosphere?" he asked.

Miss Leake looked at him in surprise.

she had never heard him speak in this way before. His simplicity had always seemed to nullify his strength of will in his dealings with her. She was not prepared for shrewdness and sarcasm.

"I think you are doing us an injustice," she answered with dignity; "I hope so."

Katie was still weeping on her aunt's shoulder. Perhaps it was the most discreet thing she could do under the circumstances.

"Shall I send her away to the nursery?" Miss Leake asked.

"There is no need. I am going out," he said; "you can keep her with you."

So Katie was left to be scolded gently and consoled abundantly, while her father went out to the solitary hillside to meditate on this last bitter experience.

It was hard to leave his child to such influences, yet, to a man of his nature, it would have been harder still to tear her away against her will. Besides, he was uncertain of his own fitness to take charge

of so delicate a creature, uncertain of his right to deprive her of the advantages which an education in England and a home among her mother's friends would give to her—from the ordinary point of view. Would not Agnes have desired that her child should retain the social advantages, the comfort, the luxury, the refinement, for which she had herself sacrificed love and home? Would not Katie herself, when she was old enough to understand, decide that her father was selfish to have deprived her of these things? What had he to give her in place of them that a woman could value? Agnes had loved him—and left him; her sisters esteemed him—and disliked him. His own little child, with an inherited refinement and a cultivated fastidiousness, had already found him unsatisfactory.

It was a hard thing, indeed, that he who so easily inspired confidence in children should have received this repulse from his own little one; he would have given her

tenderness, sympathy, and protection; but she took those as a matter of course, and demanded something more. His strength of character, his persistent purpose, his patient kindness, seemed to avail him nothing in this fastidious world in which his wife had lived, and from which his infant daughter looked at him with disapproving eyes. Negative qualities were asked from him here, rather than positive ones, and it was the positive in which he excelled. He was too old now to be trained into something smooth and highly polished; he could work and he could love; but the child of his love, the little creature in whose pulses his own life was beating, looked upon him with alien eyes, and recognized him as not of her class.

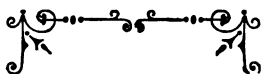
He could yield his claim to her love, but he could not take the risk of seeing her turn upon him, and tell him that his affection had been a cruelty, his claim a destruction of the rights inherited from her mother.

Therefore he went back to Australia a lonely man once more. Every one told him that it was the only thing possible to do. His child would be educated and cared for as her delicate nature required, and when she was old enough she could join him, or he could come home to her.

Miss Leake was full of anxious humility. She showed a desire to conform to Henry Dilworth's wishes in every detail of Katie's education, and spoke as if she felt herself a mere subordinate hired to carry out his plans. She was sincerely grieved at the slight he had received, and ashamed that her teaching had left it possible for the child to speak so improperly. She did her best to atone for this injury while he remained at the Stepping Stones; and little Katie herself, growing used to his presence, and finding that she was not to be taken away, adopted a tardy friendship for her father, and forgave him the roughness of his hands for the sake of the height and general comfortableness of his shoulder.

Thence she surveyed the world with satisfied eyes, and discoursed with much affability. She even offered to teach her father to talk French, if he would stay long enough to learn.

But life at the Stepping Stones was too limited for him, and he went back to his old work alone.



PART III.  
FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

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CHAPTER I.

UNDER THE ELMDALE TREES.

A YOUNG man and woman were riding slowly up a wooded lane half a mile from the Stepping Stones. The purple grey of distant mountains was seen in a gap where the lane turned; and behind the trees on each side rose the nearer hills, which met here in a kind of pass—on the one hand with a steep rocky front, on the other in a broken face of crags and knolls. The warm sunlight was modified by the overhanging foliage, there was a sweet scent of vegetation in the air, a fitful concert of birds, the running accompaniment of a river near at hand.



"Yes," the young lady was saying, with her pretty chin in the air, and a somewhat supercilious expression on her countenance, "I don't deny that it's a beautiful country; and you who belong to it may well be satisfied to spend your life here."

Her companion lifted his eyebrows a little as he answered, "You don't happen to belong to it, I suppose? It didn't occur to you to be born here?"

"It was by a kind of accident that it did; and you know that I don't consider this my home; my home is properly in Australia; I have told you so a hundred times," she answered with impatience.

"It's an odd sort of home that you have never seen, and never are likely to see—if I may make such an obnoxious remark."

The girl's face flushed with vexation.

"Why should you say so? How do you know?"

"I never hear any one speak of such a possibility except: yourself," was the reply;

"and Miss Leake seems vexed when you refer to it."

"Oh," answered the girl, with the easy contempt of youth and inexperience, "because Aunt Susie has hardly been out of Elmdale in her life she thinks no one else ought to go. Elmdale isn't the world, but she thinks it is. However, when my father wants me, she will have to let me go."

"Is your father likely to want you?" the young man asked quietly, and with a quick glance of observation at her face.

It flushed again as she replied impatiently, "I should think so; it is only natural that he should, as much as I want to go to him. Of course I must join him as soon as he considers me old enough."

"And you have been educated with this view?" he asked somewhat sarcastically.

"How unkind you are! Does it require

a special education to go to Australia, and live with one's own father?"

"When one's own father happens to be a remarkable man of original—not to say eccentric—habits of self-denial, and one happens to be one's self a young lady of fastidious taste and luxurious fashion of living."

"I don't consider myself luxurious; I'm sure my tastes are very simple."

"Oh yes; everything working so smoothly that you don't know there's any work at all going forward; I know the style of simplicity. The wheels of life revolving out of sight, and not even smelling of the oil that makes them run easily! If you went out to Australia you'd be wretched yourself, and a nuisance to your father; and it's my opinion that he's a pretty shrewd idea of it, or he would have sent for you long before this."

The young girl—who, indeed, was no other than Henry Dilworth's daughter,

Kate—was silent. Her face had become serious, and a little troubled. It was after an interval of some moments that she said slowly: "That isn't a pleasant thing to think—that I should be a nuisance to my own father."

"It wouldn't be your fault, nor his either; I don't mean that it would. But he's been roughing it out there until he's an old man, and you've been living daintily here until you are a woman. Mark my words, you were never *intended* to go out to him in Australia. If you had been, why did he never come to see you? and where would be the use of your fine boarding-school, and so on?"

"Every one must be *educated*, of course."

"What do you call education? If *you* are educated, your father isn't—from all accounts. For his system of life seems to be the opposite of yours. He's always doing something. Now, so far as I can make out the scheme of your education, it

seems to me to indicate that you have been carefully and precisely brought up—to do nothing.”

“I can do multitudes of things.”

“Can you cook a chop?—can you nurse a sick man?—can you make a dress?—can you light a fire?”

“There has never been any need for me to do those things, or I should have learnt them; of course.”

“Then you had better stay in a country where you won’t be called upon to do them. I should fancy that they are precisely the things which you would find useful in the life you’d lead with your father.”

Kate looked thoughtful; the subject was a serious one to her, and she was not inclined to quarrel with her companion’s plain speaking; she had too little of that in her life to satisfy her; and it was precisely because he indulged in it rather freely that she favoured this new and younger Jack Langford with her particular friendship.

"I could learn it all," she said.

"If you had been intended to learn it, you would have been taught long ago. I do really believe, Kate, that your father does not want you. He is too much occupied in his own pursuits to have a woman about him. If he wants one, why did your mother never go back with him to Australia?"

Kate's gravity increased.

"She was so delicate; she was never strong enough; Aunt Susie always says so," she replied in a low voice.

"Then your father might have come to live in England."

Kate looked at him with a flushed face, and spoke quickly.

"Sometimes I think, Jack, that my father hasn't been fairly treated by my mother's friends. Aunt Susie is so narrow. She is very good, and she has spoilt me dreadfully. But then she shouldn't have spoilt me! And she doesn't understand rules that don't apply to her life here in

Elmdale. My father is too big a man for Elmdale; he belongs to the world."

"Very likely you are correct; and Australia gives breathing-room even for a man destined to fill the world with his life; but you, may I be permitted to observe, have been especially trained for—Elmdale."

"Never mind me. I was speaking of my father. Perhaps he is not like the men round here—I am sure he may well be different without loss"—she said this with a touch of scorn in her voice. "Perhaps he does not care for little points of etiquette and propriety; I should fancy from things that have been said that he doesn't. And then my aunts were ashamed of him. Ashamed of a man like that! so much too great and good for them to understand!"

"I can well believe all you say. I have heard something not unlike it myself. I even believe about the goodness being beyond the Elmdale comprehension; and

therefore, allow me to submit, it would very possibly prove beyond yours."

"Mine? I am his daughter."

"Theoretically, yes. Practically, you belong to your mother's side exclusively."

"How cruel of you to say so!"

Jack Langford laughed at her vehemence.

"Your aunt would think it a compliment."

"My aunt—always my aunt! It is my father I think of; it is my father I want to belong to; that I may make up to him for all he has missed, for all my mother could not be."

Jack took his turn of silent meditation for a few moments; then he observed, "I'm not inclined to think you overrate your father's qualities; he has something of the cut of a hero about him from all accounts; but heroes are not always the pleasantest characters in domestic life. Your mother may have had her reasons."

"She was so delicate," Kate repeated.

"Pooh! delicate! She started for



Australia with a sister ; she might have repeated the experiment with her husband ; especially as he had brought her back safely the first time, when no one else could. No, I never heard of your father doing a mean thing ; I have heard of him doing many fine ones ; he is certainly a man to be proud of. But *to live with* !—that is quite another thing. We hear so much of his great qualities that it makes one doubt about his little ones ; for our friends praise us so much more readily for little than for big virtues, that when these are not mentioned it looks bad. The little ones are so much more important, don't you know."

"Well—if he had a bad temper, I shouldn't care."

"He may have a bad temper," said Jack, meditatively, "but I rather think he hasn't ; for he lived three months at the Stepping Stones, and went away without having quarrelled with any one."

"What a thing to say !"

"Well, I've a great liking for your aunts as you know, and a great respect for them; but it would be rather trying to me to live in the same house for three months, don't you think?"

"If they could only hear you!"

"I am afraid my conversation isn't as improving as it might be. Yet they persist in trusting you to my influence to a remarkable degree. The fact is that I conform to the great moral laws on the important points; I get my coats at the right place, and I dine like other people; your aunts are too reasonable to ask more."

"My father didn't do this, you think?"

"I should fancy he didn't. But then he must have been ridiculously conscientious in small matters, or he would surely have succeeded in undermining your aunt's influence over your mother, and have carried her off in spite of them."

"In spite of them?"

"Yes, I am sure they were determined

that she shouldn't go—perhaps he didn't want her ; but I can't understand a man's not wanting his wife, even if he feels afterwards that his daughter would be a nuisance."

"Thank you."

"I put it to your common sense to say whether you *wouldn't* be a nuisance, and dreadfully in the way of a man like your father. He would have to change his mode of life altogether if you went to him."

"I could change mine."

"You would mean to, but you couldn't. You hardly know where the difference lies ; your habits have become your second nature ; you'd have a thing your own way from sheer ignorance of the fact that it's not the only way possible."

"I shall see—when he sends for me," Kate answered proudly.

"He never will send. He would not have left you to be brought up in this fashion if he had meant it. But if you

want to go, why don't you write and ask him if you may?"

"No," said Kate, her cheeks flushing, "I shall never go to him unless he wants me."

Jack looked thoughtfully at Kate after her last exclamation.

"And you have a shrewd suspicion all the time that he doesn't?" he said. "Well, that's where I think the little virtues are perhaps missing. Men with scientific tastes and world-wide pursuits can't be expected to be domesticated. Perhaps he's not very affectionate, and doesn't care for family ties. I should think he doesn't, and your devotion would probably be wasted on him; it might even bore him."

"I shall not believe it," said Kate resolutely.

"He's given you every right to suppose that he doesn't care for your society. Abstract questions interest him, and women with sensitive feelings might be

only in his way. Does it ever occur to you to remember that your mother was his *second* wife?"

"Yes," said Kate in a low voice; "I often think of it, and try to understand it all. The first one was not—a lady, I know; and then he married my mother, who was so fastidious."

"Doesn't it seem to you that he must have been indifferent on important points; the women were all much the same to him, one as good as another?"

"You don't suggest pleasant things, Jack," said Kate reproachfully.

"I dare say I'm not fair. But I don't like to see you throwing away your life on an ideal that doesn't exist. It's only what I said before; your father is a great man, who doesn't want your affections in the least, who would rather put down a new mile of map than ever see his daughter again!"

"Jack, you are unkind! I never speak of him to any one but you, and you

say all these cruel things of him and me."

"It's abominably selfish, I know; and my motives are of the meanest. I say your father doesn't want you, because I want you myself; and I put you down as hopelessly useless, because I should like to have the uselessness enlisted on my own behalf."

"I wish you wouldn't speak of impossible things," she replied impatiently.

"I think they are very sensible things, if you could only look at them in the true light. I've carefully explained to you all your deficiencies, and then I'm ready to assure you that I'll put up with the sum total of them. What's the good of longing for Australia, where you would be a miserable failure, when you might stay here and be a brilliant success? If the cooking went wrong, we should only have to change our servants; if the dresses didn't fit, we would send for others; if I had the bad taste to fall ill, you could get a sister from some hos-

pital, by telegram, in a few hours, and need never show your face in the sick room. In short, if you had the common sense to marry me, your many deficiencies might go undiscovered ; you might almost forget them, and learn to believe in yourself. You have that air of being dissatisfied with the proceedings of other persons, and of being able to do things better if you would so condescend, which would pass you off splendidly—in a suitable situation—as a competent person. And I would give you my word of honour to tell no one what an imposition you were.”

“Oh, Jack, Jack!” said Kate with a pleasant ringing laugh, “did ever anybody persist in repeating a proposal of marriage in such a fashion as yours?”

“It’s a ‘declared passion,’” Jack replied gravely ; “that’s the term our grandfathers used. And you ought to treat my ‘declared passion’ with more respect. Your aunts ‘favour’ it, you know ; and I’ve no doubt your father would be ex-

ceedingly glad to hand you over to me, and solve the problem in that way."

"You go too far," said Kate with a sudden change of tone. "I am proud of my father; he is the only man in the world I care for. I will never marry so long as he is alive, and may want me."

"I may well speak ill of him," said Jack in a low voice; "he is the most dangerous rival I have."

"The only one," said Kate proudly.

They went on silently for a time; then Kate turned to her companion with an earnest look of inquiry.

"Jack," she said, "you think my father doesn't care for me, doesn't want me; do you think he would care more if he knew me?"

"That is a hard question to answer," said Jack in a low voice. "From my point of view I should say—yes; he would certainly care for you if he knew you; he couldn't help it. But then I remember that he



knew your mother — and went away without her.”

Kate turned from him with a sigh, and looked at the landscape again.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST MEETING.

THEY had reached a place where the road crossed the river, and beyond the bridge a second road branched off to the right. Mechanically they pulled up their horses at this spot, and stood silent for a moment, as if it had not been decided which way they were to go.

"Shall we go round Elmrigg this morning?" Jack asked; "it's a long time since we've been that way, and you used to like it."

"Yes," Kate answered, shaking off her gravity in order to devote herself to the business of the morning; "I should like a good canter and a breezy view. But I shall be late for lunch. I ought to have told Aunt Susie."

"I'll ride back, if you like, and tell her; it won't take long."

"Thank you, if you don't mind," she answered; whereupon he turned his horse's head round, and was gone in a moment.

She remained on the bridge, where the road was raised a little over the arch in ancient fashion, and the trees were so low that she could touch the branches easily with her riding whip. Beneath her the river rushed on in cool shadow over brown stones; some cows had wandered from the edge of the meadow, and stood in the clear water, just below the bridge.

A little farther on was a gate, leading to a footpath which crossed the meadows by a straight line, and so avoided the curve of the river.

A man had for some minutes been leaning over this gate, looking at the view; he had been near enough to hear the sound of the horses' hoofs, and he had watched with interest the approaching equestrians. When Jack turned back and left Kate

alone, this man rose and came towards her slowly. He was not an ordinary-looking person; he was tall, of a fine figure, although he stooped a little; he had a massive head, a striking cast of features, and an abundance of iron-grey hair. He had about him the air of a stranger and a traveller, a man also unused to cities. His general manner was one of easy courage and self-possession, yet at this moment there was something doubtful, almost anxious, in the way he looked at Kate. She, for her part, did not notice him; she was gazing up into the green foliage over her head; at intervals she amused herself by striking at a branch, and watching the leaves drop into the stream below, where they eddied round and floated away. In doing this the third time, her whip caught in a twig for a moment, was snatched out of her hand, and then fell into the river underneath.

“How stupid of me!” she said to herself;  
“and Jack isn’t here to get it out.”

She looked over the low wall into the stream to see whether the whip was being carried away ; then she glanced along the lane, and saw the stranger, who had come up and stood in the dust of the road, somewhat dusty and travel-stained himself, looking at her with hesitation.

She thought that she took him in at a glance ; he was of that class to whom she was accustomed to be very courteous, the class she had heard praised as "intelligent," "respectable," "independent ;" whereas the phrases of adulation for her own people were, "clever," "admirable," "generous," or "energetic." Virtues have different names as they are found in different sets ; and when we praise a man for being honest, it is evident that we don't consider him an equal, or we should have changed the adjective to honourable !

This stranger was apparently of the truly intelligent, respectable, and independent class ; he was one, therefore, whom she need have no bashfulness about accosting.

"Oh!"—she said it as a note of recognition signifying that she perceived his presence—"perhaps you'll be so very kind as to get my whip out of the water before it is carried away."

She spoke in a clear, commanding, and withal courteous voice. Evidently she had no scruple about asking the favour, and no doubt about its being granted. He looked at her with surprise, not unmingled with admiration, for she sat well on her horse, and glanced down upon him with the air of a civilly-disposed queen. Standing on the ground she would have seemed slight and girlish beside his tall and massive figure; but as it was, even her height predominated and added to the impression made by her air of haughty yet gracious ease.

He looked at her, and knew that she was his daughter; and, without a word, he made his way to the river's brink and rescued the fallen whip.

She sat on her horse above the bridge meanwhile, looking a picture of youthful

pride and beauty; she was of the age and type in which pride seems least obnoxious; it may be said that its ignorance makes its innocence. She knew so little of the world that she could be forgiven for looking at it haughtily; she still felt herself separate and distinct, with the right to judge and condemn; later on she would be bewildered by her own inconsistencies, saddened by her own failures; she would see in the weaknesses of others a reflection of her own; she would feel that she too was only one little vein through which the pulsation of humanity flowed, one with the rest, with the mass of things that she hated or despised, having only a limited power to live her own life and follow her own ideals. But she still was inexperienced enough to imagine that because she disliked whatever was ignoble she could keep her life free from it, because she admired what was noble her life would be akin to it. Meanwhile she looked with the cruel indifference of splendid and untried inten-

tions on those lives which were failures and compromises; perhaps also on those lives which were outside her own sphere, and so, she fancied, below her own level of opportunities.

Henry Dilworth came slowly up the bank with the whip in his hand—slowly because he wanted to prolong the time, as well as because he was tired, and at this moment discouraged. Never before had he felt so diffident and uncertain. With his wife he had been a great power and influence, even when he had failed to satisfy her; with his wife's friends he had been made to feel that there was too much of him rather than too little; that if he could have been subdued, he would have been tolerable. But he had looked in his daughter's face, and felt that to her he was nothing.

It was a strange experience, and many strange thoughts went through his mind as he came up the bank, so slowly that Kate thought to herself, with some compunction:



"Perhaps he is tired; he looks as if he had come a long way, and he is an old man; his hair is quite grey."

There was something, therefore, very graciously kind in her manner as she stooped to take the whip, and said, in the sweetest voice he had ever heard, for all its ring of imperiousness: "I'm sorry to have troubled you. Have you wet your feet?"

He looked down at his boots absently. They were large and clumsy; the dust on them had been changed to mud by contact with the water.

"It doesn't matter; I'm used to it," he said; and his eye fell on her delicate little foot resting on the stirrup. He remembered the small and pretty feet of Agnes, but this foot was different; there was character in it, as there was character in the turn of Kate's head and the tone of her voice; this foot, though so dainty, was not helpless; it was used to going its own way, and doing its own work.

Then he raised his eyes to her face again, and looked at her sadly, and he said to himself: "It is as Miss Leake told me; she is outside my life; she doesn't even imagine that I could have anything to do with hers."

She was certainly more beautiful than he had expected; for the lovely lines of her mother's face were reflected in hers, with all the commanding style which had belonged to her aunt Kate. And her haughtiness was not shallow as the first Kate's had been; that, indeed, had never impressed Henry Dilworth much, or embarrassed him at all; it had been fitful and capricious, without foundation of character. But here, in his own daughter, he found the manner repeated with meaning behind it. There was all the graceful sweetness of his wife also; and he did not know that it was his own dignity of character, blending with those two unlike types, which shone out in his daughter's looks, and made her so impressive and unapproachable. She

had done nothing, so far, to distinguish herself or prove her superiority in any direction; but she had a simplicity and unselfishness of purpose which inspired her with genuine self-respect, and seemed to give her a right to hold others aloof, and to make a little solitude—a separate atmosphere, so to speak—around herself, when she felt so disposed.

“Kate doesn’t know her own value,” Miss Leake used to say. “She is made to shine in society, and she would like to throw all her gifts away where they wouldn’t be understood.”

But it was precisely that capability of throwing her gifts away in a useful current that inspired with beautiful life the ornamental parts of her character and manner. Those ornamental parts are apt in highly-civilized societies to survive the useful life they are meant to beautify. The more important qualities get cultivated out in some carefully-educated families; and it had been so to a certain degree with Miss

Leake's younger sisters. Now the family type of manner had reappeared in conjunction with a strong type of character; and Henry Dilworth was for the first time in his life discouraged and made diffident, by the very force of feeling and directness of purpose which his daughter had inherited from himself. It took another form with her, and it had been led into no useful channels, rather had it been corrupted and turned astray as much as possible; but it was real enough to have all the force of truth, and was all the more impressive because it was innocent of any intention to impress. Kate was as simple in her gracious dignity to-day as her father had been in his unreserved kindness years before.

He had only spoken those few words in answer to her question, but he still stood looking at her as if he had something more to say. She thought that he was embarrassed or diffident.

"Can I be of any use to you?" she

asked politely. "You are a stranger here ; can I tell you the way?"

"Thank you, I know it," he answered briefly.

She looked a little surprised, but as he did not move she went on speaking.

"That is a short cut across the fields to some houses beyond the river. But it would not save you anything if you are going into the Elmdale village. You seem tired. You have come a long way perhaps?"

"I am used to walking," he said with the same brevity with which he had before spoken ; it had, however, nothing discourteous in its simplicity.

"If you take that gate and go through the field you can cross the river by some stepping-stones. It is pleasanter walking, perhaps ; not so dusty."

He did not look round at the path she indicated. If he did not go to his daughter's home he had no intention of passing it by.

"Thank you. I know the way," he said quietly.

"You have been here before?"

"Yes, many years ago."

He lifted his hat mechanically and moved on. It seemed to be with an effort that he took his eyes from her face, though there was nothing in his gaze that could embarrass her. The pleasant directness of his look was the same which had inspired confidence in Agnes years before; but the consciousness of power was perhaps a little dimmed, the expression of cheerfulness a little saddened.

Kate turned her head to look after him with wonder and interest; and just as Jack reappeared in the lane, the stranger came back and spoke to her again.

"Perhaps you can tell me whether Thomas Broadhurst still keeps the Red Cow," he said, speaking with a quiet deference, which she could not classify as "respectful," and yet which was not the manner of one who was her equal. There

was in this man an indefinable mixture of humility and authority, the like of which she had not observed in any one before.

"No; he died years ago," she answered promptly; "but if you are going to the Red Cow you will be comfortable; some very nice people keep it now. Jane Clegg, who was our own housemaid, married James Dodd, and they have it. But of course," she added, with a little smile at her own simplicity, "you do not know who these people are, nor who I am."

He fixed his eyes on hers with his singularly direct look and answered quietly, "I think so; you are Henrietta Kate Dilworth."

She flushed to the temples with surprise, not as much that he should know her name as that he should utter it with such directness and without any polite prefix. There was evidently no disrespect in his manner, however, so that she let the latter peculiarity pass without notice.

"How do you know?" she asked. "No

one calls me by the first name ; it was given to me after—" she hesitated and did not finish.

"Your father," he said, and turned to go on his way.

"How do you know?" she said again, quickly. "Are you not a stranger here? Perhaps I ought to know you."

"You have forgotten," he answered quietly.

"And you have seen me before?"

She was persistent in her questions, because she felt that this remarkable-looking man could not have passed any time in Elmdale without attracting her observation. There seemed some little mystery about him. He was like no one else, and certainly was no native production.

"I was here years ago, when you were a little child."

"And you stayed, perhaps, at the Red Cow?"

"No, I never stayed there."

But after all, when she came to think



of it; it was not wonderful that he should have heard of her, should know her name and something of her history. She was an important personage in the quiet valley, and might well be pointed out to strangers with her full designation appended. Nevertheless, her curiosity was aroused and her interest excited.

"Perhaps my aunt would remember you, if I were to tell her your name," she suggested.

"No," he answered, in his quiet, decided way; "it isn't necessary to trouble her." And he moved on, without any hesitation this time, with the air of a man who knows where he is going to.

Jack Langford, coming back to rejoin Kate, took a long look at the traveller as he passed him. He was a significant enough figure, as, drawn now to his full height, he strode along the lonely lane with his head erect; a figure significant enough to attract attention, even if he had not made himself important by speaking to Kate.

"What a remarkable-looking man!" Jack observed, when he reached his companion. He drew up his horse and remained looking after the steadily-retreating figure. "What has he been saying to you?"

"He picked my whip out of the river for me. Then he asked who lived at the Red Cow now. He is going there. It's very odd, because he looks such a stranger, but he says he has been here before; and he knew who I was, my name and everything."

"H'm!" said Jack thoughtfully, and with an observant glance at her face. "It's a curious thing. Does it strike you that he's like any one you know?"

"No," she answered with quiet interest; "I didn't think so. Has it occurred to you?"

Jack lifted his eyebrows with a deprecatory glance.

"I've a vivid imagination, you know. I suppose he didn't mention his name?"

"No; he said it wasn't necessary!"

"Then you tried to find it out?"

"Yes; as he knew mine it seemed only fair."

"You got nothing by your attempt, it appears. And now for Elmrigg. If we mean to make the circuit of it we must be off; and we've a nice level bit of ground before us now."

They touched up their horses into a gallop, and said no more at that time about the stranger.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE SECOND TIME.

It was late in the afternoon when Kate Dilworth and her companion, having made the circuit of Elmrigg, rode past the little inn kept by James and Jane Dodd.

The Red Cow was a rustic-looking house with a porch on the roadside, made beautiful by clinging creepers. It had a second entrance at the side, where a flower garden ran down to a point between the road and the river ; this was the private door, reserved for the use of the little household and the lodgers, who sometimes occupied Jane Dodd's rooms in summer-time. The gate into the garden was open, and Kate, as was her frequent custom, rode up the gravel footpath to the door to speak to Jane Dodd, and ask for a glass

of milk. Jack Langford remained in the road, talking to a tenant who had met and addressed him.

“ You’ll come in and see the baby, won’t you, Miss Dilworth ? ” Jane Dodd inquired, as she brought the milk ; “ she’s not been herself like these two days ; I think I ought to let the doctor see her. If you’ll go forward I’ll call some one to hold the horse.”

Kate sprang to the ground and went in ; she was followed immediately by Jane Dodd, and some minutes were spent in looking at the baby and hearing the account of its ailments. Kate had never adopted the character of Lady Bountiful, but she was on very friendly terms with some of the dales-people who had been thrown in her way, especially those who had been in her aunt’s service. They were all impressed by her distinguished manner and her airs of decision, and were inclined to believe that her advice was good on all subjects, from toothache to the fittest names for the new babies, and the prices they ought to ask

for their rooms in the season. Kate was always willing to give a weighty opinion on one side or another to the problems presented for her solution; but she was not disposed to originate general advice. "I should have the tooth out by all means," or "I don't think you'll get a guinea for this sitting-room," being the extent of her discourse on such occasions; the manner, however, in which it was delivered caused it to be generally received as the conclusive utterance of a great authority. She gave her opinion now promptly.

"The doctor is visiting at the Broadhursts' just above, I know; you had better get him to look at the baby the next time he comes."

"Well, I am glad you came past to-day," Jane discoursed, as she accompanied her visitor to the door. "As I said to James, I don't like to let things go too long. And how is Miss Leake? Quite well, I hope; and Mrs. Dewhurst, too?"

When they reached the garden, Kate's horse was standing by the door, the stranger of the morning holding it, and stroking its neck, as he looked at it with interested eyes.

"Thank you," said Kate, with a bright smile of recognition; "I am sorry to have troubled you."

He helped her to mount, then he stood still, with his grave look of observation, which made her again fancy that he had something to say. His grey hairs, his striking appearance—which was uncommon without being exactly distinguished—inclined her to treat him with special consideration. He seemed to her a superior man in an inferior rank of life; and she was inspired to show him the respect which he appeared to her to merit—the respect of the young for the old, of the thoughtless beginner in life for the well-tried veteran, who bears in his face the marks of a long battle not ignobly fought. It was not exactly the respect which she would have

shown to an old man in her own position, not at all the respect she intended to show to her father; *that* would be full of humility and reverence, while this was inspired by a kindly consciousness of her own advantages. She wished to put this stranger entirely at his ease, not to awaken in him any perception of his deficiencies. In the presence of her father she would have desired to please in quite another sense; to satisfy *him*, to meet *his* idea would have been her aspiration.

And the difference of her manner was significantly felt by Henry Dilworth. His mind had been awakened to the finer shades of thought, and its expression in tone and manner, by his own strong feeling and anxious desire on her behalf. He was aware that this bright young girl was pleasantly polite to him as to one out of her own sphere, one who would never for a moment presume to judge or influence her in return for the gracious friendliness she showed to him.



None of all this thought was, however, to be seen in his face as he looked at her with his serious eyes; and then, glancing away to the horse, observed:

"It is a fine animal. Are you fond of riding?"

"Very fond of it."

"Have you been round Elmrigg this morning?"

"Yes. Do you know the road?"

"Very well. It is a bad road. You cannot be a timid rider."

"No," she answered a little proudly; "I hope I am not timid in anything," for courage was a quality which she had cherished with secret self-congratulation. She felt that it was a virtue her father would require and approve of.

"You are not like your mother in one respect, then," he said quietly; "she did not like riding."

Kate's face flushed a little as at a personal accusation.

"You knew my mother?"

He turned his eyes to her again with a look she could not understand; it was full of a subdued sadness, of a feeling which had been content to exist long without speech, which had perhaps never known how to utter itself; and he gave her one of those straightforward yet unsatisfactory replies of which she had already received several from him.

“Yes, I knew her.”

Kate looked down at her horse and stroked it; she was interested, yet embarrassed.

“My mother was very timid; she did not like riding, or anything which required nerve,” she said in a low voice, as if it were treason to speak in this way, while yet a stronger curiosity impelled her to pursue the subject.

“No, she was very timid—and gentle,” he said, with a sigh which she could not know to be one of regretful remembrance.

She looked up at him quickly, with a new idea in her mind.

"You like timidity and gentleness?" she asked. "I know that some persons think them the most womanly qualities."

"They were very beautiful and most womanly in your mother."

Kate's horse reared a little, and pawed the ground, but it was because she had made an impatient movement of the bridle. She was thinking to herself, "All men do not approve of courage in women; my father chose my mother and married her; perhaps he admired timidity and weakness; Aunt Susan says all strong men like the qualities they have not got themselves; perhaps he would think me bold and unwomanly. But no, no; when I am so only that I may live *his* sort of life and be a help to him, he cannot think it. And a daughter is not like a wife; I don't care if other men, men who want wives, don't approve of me; it is my father whom I hope to please."

All this flashed through her mind instantaneously. Her love for her father, her

desire to go to him, having been so long subdued and silenced by those around her, had ended by taking possession of her mind like a passion. The dream of a life with him, a dream which she was not permitted to entertain openly, shaped all her thoughts, and influenced all her actions. Every new light which was thrown upon life brought his image into her mind and affected her as she fancied it might affect her relationship with him.

She was silent only a moment, and then she said dreamily :

“You knew my mother, I suppose, when she was young and very pretty?”

“Pretty!” he repeated in surprise. It seemed a poor word to use in describing the woman who had awakened in him such reverential tenderness, whose love was the sweetest and most wonderful memory of his life. “No, I never thought her pretty.”

There was some vague reproof in his tone which Kate did not understand. It could not occur to her that the epitaph seemed trifling,

coming from her lips and applied to the woman who had been his wife and her mother. She had been accustomed to hear her mother spoken of in this way, as something slight, sweet, and helpless. How could she dream of all that this man had imagined her to be, all that he would have helped her to become if the chance had been given to him?"

"I always understood that every one found her so," she replied with a shade—almost imperceptible—of haughtiness in her manner.

She was thinking that perhaps she had been wrong in permitting this stranger to speak of her own family. But he was not abashed by her tone; he even looked at her with something of dignified rebuke as he answered:

"She was sweetness itself, if you mean that."

She turned her horse round towards the gate with a little air of vexation. She did not understand the situation, and did not

like it. The stranger watched her still with his gravely-observant look, which softened after a moment into sympathy. She was so young, and evidently so innocent of intentional wrong-doing or saying that he could not blame her seriously. She merely repeated what she had been told by others; that was apparent.

He put his hand on the reins for a moment, and spoke with a certain air of gentle authority.

"If any one has taught you to think slightly of your mother, don't allow yourself to do it. She deserved your love and reverence."

Kate drew back haughtily.

"Sir," she said with head erect and a proud glance, "what right have you to suppose that I need such advice about my mother? or to give it if I do?"

He looked bewildered for a moment ; then an expression of disappointment that was not humiliation came over his face ; something that was half remembrance, half regret.

"It is true," he said, "I beg your pardon," and he stood back on the grass to let her pass.

She touched her horse with the whip, and with a silent bow to him rode out through the gate. Jane Dodd had gone back to her baby at the beginning of the interview; for the greater part of it Jack Langford had waited outside the garden, watching with close interest and a determination not to interfere.

"Well?" he said when she came out to him, looking flushed and displeased.

"Let us go home," was her answer.

"Is that all? Have you quarrelled with your new friend?"

"He is not my friend, and I should not quarrel with a stranger."

Having received this rebuke Jack said no more, but he thought his own thoughts as they rode home together.

## CHAPTER IV.

### NIECE AND DAUGHTER.

THE family at the Stepping Stones consisted now of Kate and two aunts, one of whom—Susie—was still unmarried and the other a childless widow. The third aunt—Ellen—had died some years before. It was she who had been the charitable one of the household, who had visited the poor and shown a faint tendency (much chilled by Susie) to distribute soup and tracts. A few of her special pensioners still hung about the place, and transferred their demands to Kate.

Miss Leake permitted her niece to be benevolent to a limited degree, but would have been greatly displeased had she desired to erect charity into a serious pursuit. Kate had been educated, and she was care-



fully kept free for marriage, although this end and aim of her existence had never been disclosed to her. A certain amount of benevolent interest in the poor people who were thrown in her way seemed to Miss Leake a proper part of a young girl's character. But she was not permitted to seek out those who required help, nor to visit them in any organized or methodical fashion. The vicar of the place would gladly have enlisted the intelligent energy of Miss Dilworth in the service of his parish, but Miss Leake permitted nothing of the sort; and the young lady's own dreams and ambitions were turned in quite another direction. She was allowed to humour a few sick people, who regarded it as an honour to see the young lady by their bedsides; and she was permitted to stand as godmother to the cottagers' babies, when ambitious parents desired to secure this distinction for their offspring. She was very popular among the poorer people, having that commanding presence and

slight haughtiness of manner which enhanced the value of her affability and kindness.

Miss Leake had never been so much liked by her humbler neighbours. She was not naturally fitted to make a good country lady; for, with all her cleverness, she was very narrow, and could never expand into the genial neighbourliness of a true daleswoman. She had so many little precepts and proprieties, that she could not happily extend her acquaintance into circles not her own; she was formed for an artificial life, where, in the midst of numbers, she could conduct her own household on its own basis, keeping it separate and alone. That comparative solitude of Elmdale, which permitted existence, so to speak, to run out in straggling edges instead of being confined in the strict circles of town life—where every one must revolve round his own natural centre or be lost in the vortex—this solitude and freedom only signified difficulty and danger to Miss Leake. She

would have liked to apply the little rules of life here as closely as in London itself.

She had not been brought up in the country, and had no taste for it. The Stepping Stones came to her as a legacy from a relative of her mother's, and it had made a suitable retreat for the family on the death of its head. Miss Leake had been happy enough there, but she made her happiness out of family interests and social connections.

After the death of her youngest sister, Kate had become the great care of her life. The brother in India was a bachelor; Anna, her second sister, after a married life of some years, came back to the Stepping Stones a childless widow. She was ready to submit to the amiable tyranny of her elder sister as she had done when a girl, and she fell at once into her old subordinate position.

Robert, the brother in London, had many children; but his wife was a fashion-

able, showy sort of woman, who managed her own affairs and brooked no interference. The London nephews and niece, who were also fond of showy things and followed novelties in taste and opinion briskly, engaged a very small portion of Aunt Susie's affections.

Kate was the solitary one of the second generation on whom she could pour the affectionate interest so abundantly required by the first. And Kate had been, and was still, a considerable cause of anxiety. She had so much "spirit," as her friends called it, and was not easily induced to give up an idea once adopted. She was never saucy, as the first Kate had been, and yet was more difficult to manage. She was apt to yield in small points and to remain fixed on larger ones, so that she could not be led blindly up any road while amusing herself with the details of it as the first Kate, and also Agnes, had done. These two had indulged in fancies and caprices about the trifles of life, but its greater questions they

had not troubled to think out for themselves. Cruel circumstances had brought their happy prospects to a disastrous end, and now Miss Leake was left once more to build up a prosperous life for a young creature, and this time for one of a far less facile disposition than her first darling had been.

The existence of Henry Dilworth in his far-away home was a great difficulty in her path. A father, though unseen, could not fail to be an influence on his daughter's life; and it did not suit Miss Leake's idea, nor agree with her principles, to nourish disrespectful thoughts of her brother-in-law in her niece's mind. She herself spoke of him always with profound respect, as a remarkable man, who was doing great and distinguished service for science in other lands. She encouraged Kate to believe that she might reasonably be proud of her father, and those slighting thoughts of him which Kate had guessed at were never intentionally revealed. Nevertheless, her representation

*NIECE AND DAUGHTER.*

of Henry Dilworth's character did him signal injustice; for it depicted him as indifferent to domestic ties, and cold in personal affections. She spoke as if a young girl, even one who was his daughter, could awake but a trifling feeling of interest in a man absorbed in pursuits which influenced the world. Her talk of him was a continual suggestion of the small amount of thought which he could give to Kate, and the danger of her becoming a burden upon his actions, or a drag on his career. She expressed her desire that Kate should not make him anxious, that she should speak of herself always as happy and satisfied with her present life. It was her continual dread that he might return to England and claim his daughter, which event would have been, in her idea, as fatal to Kate's happiness as his marriage had been fatal to her mother's. She felt that his return would matter less after Kate was married and safely settled at home; therefore every year of his absence was a year of reprieve and of

hope. Her letters to him, polite and formal as they were, breathed this idea from beginning to end. It was evident to him that she feared his return as a danger to his daughter's peace of mind, that she looked upon his absence as a security for her happiness. There was an unspoken appeal to him in all she wrote, which seemed to say "Do not spoil this second young life, as you did the first, by your mistaken love."

And when he read his daughter's letters he found in them no contradiction of her aunt's belief. He was a stranger to his child; and she had the awkward timidity as well as the proud reserve of youth. She always waited for him to want her, to speak the first word, and she would be ready enough to respond to his appeal. But she would never force herself upon him, never mar his career and baffle his ambition as her aunt had implied that she might do by the indiscreet expression of her desires. She would wait, and keep herself free; that was all she could do. Meanwhile she fed upon

dreams, which were a poor preparation for the reality. She thought of her father as a hero, misunderstood and unappreciated ; and she was ready to throw herself at his feet in ardent self-sacrifice. Simply to make his acquaintance in commonplace fashion, to humour his habits, to condone his peculiarities, these were things for which she was more unready than she imagined. It seemed to Miss Leake that fortune favoured her plans in decreeing the existence of a second Jack Langford in Elmdale. He was the nephew of the first, the head of the family, and the owner of a good estate at her very door. He had been named after his uncle, who had been his godfather ; and he was a few years older than Kate. As a family connection he was admitted at the Stepping Stones on a very intimate footing, and he was Kate's most frequent companion in her morning rides. Miss Leake held that it was ridiculous to keep a saddle-horse for her niece, as long as she had no brother or father to ride with her ;



but the horse had been given by the uncle from India; during a two years' visit to England. He had taken a great fancy to Kate, and made her his principal companion during his stay with his sisters. They explored the valleys and scoured the hills together, and after he left England the horse which he had bought for Kate was still kept in the stable. Miss Leake regarded its presence with a secret indulgence, because it was the pretext for many mornings spent together by Jack and Kate. Their connection was so well known in the valley that their frequent companionship seemed natural to every one, and excited little remark.

Nevertheless, Miss Leake hoped that the intercourse would end in a marriage, and such a marriage must insure Kate's social safety, and render Henry Dilworth's influence harmless.

"So very suitable, you know," she said to her sister Anna when they talked the matter over.

"Nothing could be *more* suitable," said Mrs. Dewhurst with emphasis.

Young Jack Langford, for his part, was quite willing to fulfil the expectations he had excited. Nothing would have pleased him better than to marry Kate and to establish her for life in Elmdale. He told her so, and occasioned in this way their first quarrel. She chose to be offended at the idea, and he felt disappointed and hurt at her refusal of himself. Thereupon he forsook Elmdale for a time, and strove to enlarge his mind and mitigate his affliction by travel. He made his will in Kate's favour after the most approved fashion of disconsolate lovers, and thought of joining her father in the wilds of Australia.

The civilization of Europe satisfied him, however, and he returned to Elmdale to see if Kate hadn't changed her mind. There was a little awkwardness on their first meeting, but in a few weeks they were surprised to find themselves as good friends

as ever, and thereupon Jack proposed a truce.

"I can go on intending to marry you, if you'll have me, and you can go on intending to live with your father, if he'll have you. One of us must be disappointed—probably both; but we needn't quarrel meantime."

So the situation remained.

Miss Leake had been much disappointed by her niece's refusal of Mr. Langford's offer, but she had not felt it safe to press her advice on the wilful girl, lest she might create a grievance sufficiently large to be communicated to Henry Dilworth. She was proportionately relieved when the young people drifted back to their old terms of intimacy, and made up their quarrel. It could only end *one* way, she thought, however long it might take Kate to make up her mind.

Jack Langford tried occasionally to better his position with Kate. As a very happy thought, he proposed that she should marry him,—and he should take her out to her

father. But she would not listen even to this tempting offer.

"I want to give my life to him, not to pay him a visit," she replied with decision.



## CHAPTER V.

### A BROKEN BRIDGE.

BESIDES this reason, she had another. She was very fond of Jack as a companion and friend; she talked to him of things which she never mentioned to other people; but she had a natural shyness or reserve which made personal familiarity obnoxious to her. It was inherited perhaps, in a new and exaggerated form, from her mother. She did not want to give any one the right to make love to her; she shrank from caresses; she had a prejudice against kisses.

Miss Leake, in spite of her affection, had not overwhelmed her with fondness, and since the days when she was a little child, and had sat on her father's knee, she had received caresses from none but women.

Even her Indian uncle did not presume on his relationship, but treated her with courtly politeness, as a charming young lady to whose society he was fortunate enough to have some claim. And in her dreams of union with her father she had no vision of personal endearments; she understood him to be abstracted, reserved, somewhat indifferent; for had he not abandoned the sweet fondness of her mother? She was prepared to enter into his views, to aid his purposes, to administer to his comfort, and altogether to promote his happiness by her presence; but she had no expectation of being petted or caressed, and no desire to be so treated. It would take some strong emotion to break down the barrier of personal reserve which custom and nature had woven about the young and tender frankness hidden underneath.

The name of "young Mr. Langford" was by no means unknown to Henry Dilworth even while he was in Australia.

Miss Leake had confided to Kate's father, with due cautiousness, her wishes on Kate's behalf. She told how the young people were constantly together, how happy Kate seemed to be in Mr. Langford's society, and how likely it was that the friendship would end in a marriage, as Mr. Langford had long desired. Then she praised Jack, assured her brother-in-law that he was a young man whom he would certainly like and approve when he came to know him; she spoke also of his excellent prospects, of his *suitable* position. She also proceeded further to observe that it was very desirable for girls to settle early in life; undecided prospects, uncertain position having ruined many a girl's health and happiness; and then she did *not* speak of Agnes, but she knew that Henry Dilworth would think of her. While she dwelt on the advantages of a marriage with Jack Langford, and a consequent settlement among "friends that she knew, duties that she understood, places to which she was

attached," she did not refrain from reference to other triumphs of her niece, especially those achieved on a visit to the London uncle. A baronet had, she understood, paid to Kate "very great attention." She felt that this would convince her brother-in-law of two important things—firstly, that she herself had no mere worldly ambition, but desired only safety and happiness for her niece, since she could let the baronet go without regret; secondly, that Kate was not fitted to be hidden away in a corner of the world cooking steaks and darning stockings; that she was, on the contrary, brilliant and accomplished, formed to shine in the society which was her natural sphere, and where only she could move happily and easily.

Henry Dilworth understood it all. His mind, once so slow to perceive a hidden implication, an unspoken suggestion, had been sharpened by bitter experience and keen disappointment. He saw the whole position from Miss Leake's point of view,



and he thought that perhaps she was right.

Nevertheless he could not bear to take her word for it, and so he resolved to go to England and see.

He did not send word that he was coming, and his silence did not arise this time from haste, but from doubt and uncertainty. He landed in England in a condition of indecision which had been absolutely unknown to him in the earlier part of his life. In his youth prompt perception of the next thing to be done and cheerful readiness to do it had seemed essential attributes of his character. Now he set foot on his native shore with half a dozen contradictory plans struggling in his mind. He would write to Elmdale—he would not write; he would do some business in London and go back to Australia without seeing his daughter at all; he would send for her to join him; all these schemes he thought of in turn, and finally, without coming to any positive decision, but at-

tracted by a desire beyond his control, he took the train for the north of England, with a portmanteau in his hand. The main part of his luggage he left in London, thinking he could return to it or send for it as events decided.

He was put down at the nearest station to Elmdale, and slowly walked towards his daughter's home. He could not even yet be certain that he wished to see her and so make an ineffaceable claim upon her. So far, she was free of all actual knowledge of him, and of all demands on her affection. Would such demands be painful to her, disastrous to her comfort? If it were certainly so, he would gladly go back to Australia to die there a lonely man. But if, on the other hand, she was capable of loving him and of rejoicing in his love, what a treasure he would lose by his absence and silence! He thought of a quiet home—in some near county—where he could rest from active work and be happy in his daughter's society. There he

could work up the discoveries he had made into useful form, and put his numerous notes into shape for publication. Possibly she might help him in that work, her letters being in his eyes beautiful models of composition. It all depended on her own feeling, on the way in which she revealed it in her greeting; for he was, on his side, certain to love her; even ugliness and bad temper would not have subdued his instincts of affection.

She could not have the same feeling for him, and it might even be that the cruel idealism of youth would shut him out from her love and make her unhappy at his claim. He remembered her as a bright-eyed child, intelligent rather than pretty, and he could not, in spite of her letters to him, fill up the gap of years between that time and this, and realize what she must have become in the interval.

As he approached the place where the footpath to the Stepping Stones left the high road, he heard the sound of horses'

hoofs, and he was startled by a thrill of recognition when he caught a first glimpse of the two figures in the lane. He had seen some one who resembled them in other circumstances; they were like old acquaintances in a new life, and unconscious of the past in which he had known them. He was aware that a crisis in his life might be approaching, and that idea subdued him at once to an attitude of quiet waiting. He leaned against the gate and looked into the field to give himself more time for observation; and the pleasant sound of the young voices came to him with the murmur of the river; but he could not hear the words they uttered.

This brief picture of the two figures was one suggestive of happiness and harmony with surrounding circumstances. The lovely scenery in the foreground—wooded knolls, grey rocks, trees, and river—was completed by the glimpses in the background of noble mountains and purple distances. And the life to be led in such a

spot might be one of mingled refinement and nobility. Nature had its grandeur of aspect in this valley without having given itself up to ruggedness and desolation. And humanity here was trained also to grace and beauty; it had been subdued to harmonious movements, but was not necessarily without higher powers and possibilities. The young equestrians were evidently prosperous examples of the productions native to this place; happiness was a natural thing to them, because they found themselves where all things fitted their capabilities and satisfied their desires. What was wanting in their life, and why should it be disturbed in its smoothness? What had he, a rude colonist, to do with them or their valley? He was a bit out of another life-puzzle which could only be fitted into this one by deranging its pieces and destroying its symmetry.

When Jack Langford rode away, leaving his companion alone, Henry Dilworth turned from the gate and went on towards her.

As it chanced, she spoke to him, she looked at him ; and he could stand and look at her. He knew then, without any doubt, that she was his daughter, the child of his love and disappointment. He had every claim on her affection, every right over her life, and yet he stood there as a stranger to whom she condescended to be courteous. The actual power was his, but she was apparently mistress of the situation. Her first words seemed to decide his fate ; it was impossible to reply to her kindly condescension by the humiliating disclosure of their relationship to one another. Her complete unconsciousness of any possible tie between them, as shown by the careless freedom of her address, put a strong barrier against the revelation of his identity. He felt himself what he seemed to be, a stranger, one who had let his claim on her love drift away to destruction. The thought of going on to the Stepping Stones left him at once ; if he could not claim his daughter now when they stood face to

face alone, he could not permit her to find him awaiting her at home with a painful surprise.

So he took his way to the Red Cow, not yet trying to understand his position, or to decide how he was to work his way out of it. There were strangers, new-comers, at the little inn now ; there he would not be recognized ; he could wait and rest and think what course to take.

It was still open to him to go away as he had come, unknown and unsuspected. He had seen his daughter, had seen that she was full of beautiful health, and bright happiness ; he had seen, too, the man whom Miss Leake had described as his possible son-in-law, and he might be satisfied that Kate's prosperity did not require his presence. He was very much saddened, however ; for it seemed a hard thing to resign all claim upon this young creature while yet he was the nearest relation she had in the world. He had given up his wife, whether for her happiness or misery he had

never clearly known; he had for a time yielded to Miss Leake's wishes, and resigned all demand on his child; but now that she was old enough to decide for herself, must he give her up once again, when he needed her most, and had confirmed his affection for her by actual sight? She would no longer be a vague image to him, her memory would haunt his loneliness; he would always know all that he lost in leaving her.

He established himself at the Red Cow, got out some papers intended for a geographical journal, which he had brought with him to put in order and send off. He felt in his reluctance and indecision inclined at least to linger in this quiet spot for a few days, resting and letting his mind grow to a wise resolve. He was weary and worn out; disappointment tried him now more than fatigue, and the last twenty years of his life had made up in wear and tear of emotion for the peaceful progress of the twenty before them. His health was



already broken, and he was well aware of it. The unusual power of his limbs remained to him for occasional use; but if the muscles were right, the vital energy was gone; he was vaguely conscious of the fact that a prolonged life or a speedy death awaited him, according as he fashioned his manner of living in the immediate future. Life, with his daughter's affection to brighten it, might be a precious thing; but life spent in cherishing itself alone would be impossible to him. If no happy home awaited him he must go back to die in harness.

He worked at his papers a little; but he was restless and abstracted; in the evening he left them for a lonely ramble on the hillside over the roads he had known long before. One or two peasants looked at him with wonder and half recognition, but he was sufficiently altered to escape being actually known. His hair was grey, he had grown a beard, and he stooped a little; the long swing of his powerful limbs was

made with a slight appearance of effort. The last fifteen years had changed him from a man who had hardly reached middle age to one who was already old.

The sight of old scenes and the fresh air of the mountain revived him a little ; fatigued in body, but somewhat more hopeful in spirit, he awaited the coming of a new day.

The new day when it came brought a slight adventure. A violent thunderstorm in the course of the night threw down a large tree on the bank of the river a little above the inn ; and this tree destroyed in its fall a footbridge across the stream. It was connected with a path coming along the hillside down to the valley, and its destruction cut off communication between the two sides of the river at this spot. In the course of the morning a boy belonging to the Red Cow reported that he had just seen from the high road a lady descending Elmrigg towards the foot-path.

“It looked like Miss Dilworth,” he re-

marked, "and if it is, she's not heard of the break, and will have to go round by the upper bridge."

Henry Dilworth, hearing this, took up his hat and made his way to the broken bridge. He reached it a few minutes before Kate appeared on the other side of the water. She wore a pretty morning dress, and walked with that erect and graceful step which gave her an air of distinction that was independent of beauty.

She paused at the bridge with a look of surprise and perplexity, advanced cautiously for a foot or two on the broken timber to reconnoitre, and then became aware that her new acquaintance of the day before was drawing off his boots on the opposite bank. She stood still to watch, and he made no sign of perceiving her, or of acting on her account. He stepped into the water with his stockinged feet and proceeded cautiously to wade across. The river came round a curve at this point,

and rushed between its banks with some depth and violence, but its water was beautifully clear and every pebble at the bottom was seen, lying golden brown, or mossy green, or blue grey, under the sparkling surface. It seemed to Henry Dilworth a mere brooklet, for it came only above his knees, and he had been accustomed to swim strong and broad torrents. He was across directly; and while Kate was still wondering what his purpose could be, he had begun to speak.

"There's been an accident here in the night; of course you didn't know of it. But I can easily take you across."

"Oh no," said Kate, "I couldn't think of it; I hope you didn't come on purpose."

He smiled without answering. There was a strength of will in his smile and in his manner which conquered her as it had conquered her mother long before. She was unaware of the conscious authority with which he looked at her, but she

yielded to it as if she had known what it meant.

"If you will put your hand on my shoulder and keep quiet, you shan't even wet your feet."

"But it isn't worth while."

"It is quite easy. That will do. It would have been a pity for you to go round."

He stepped into the stream as if he found her a very light burden to carry; but a strong emotion disturbed and weakened him at the moment. All his instincts of tenderness were roused by the situation, by the touch of her arm on his neck, the softness of her breath on his cheek. In the swiftest part of the stream he stood still. A strange giddiness and blindness, such as he had felt once or twice before, seized him there; but he gave no sign of it, and, after waiting a moment to recover himself, he went on easily and put her down on the bank.

"Thank you very much," said Kate,

fixing bright eyes of wonder upon him; "it was so very much to do just to save me a walk."

"It was nothing," he said, and he walked back with her to the Red Cow in silence. Then he said good-morning to her and stood at the gate watching her walk quietly away.

She looked round, then came back, and seeing him still there said with a heightened colour:

"Hadn't you better go in and change your things? They are so very wet. You might take cold."

He looked down at his own feet as if roused to a consciousness of their condition.

"It is nothing," he answered, "I am used to it."

"But——"

"But I'll change them if you like."

He turned and went indoors accordingly, but when he reached his own room he appeared to forget what he had come for.

He sat down on a chair by the table, put his head on his hand, and plunged at once into abstracted thought. He no longer remembered his daughter's suggestion, nor his own intention of acting upon it.



## CHAPTER VI.

### A LONELY OLD AGE.

KATE had already reported at home something of her first meeting with the stranger, without arousing the alarm or suspicion of her aunt. For Miss Leake's shrewdness was tempered by dulness; she was quick-sighted where her vigilance had been roused, but sometimes very blind in other directions. Therefore when her niece told her of some old man who had asked about the Red Cow, and who seemed to remember her mother very well, Miss Leake did not even try to think who it could be.

"Everybody knew your mother, of course," she said; "people who never spoke to her were glad to get a look at her; and some of the farms have changed



hands several times. If this man lived here twenty years ago he would be sure to know your mother. Everybody noticed her; there wasn't such another girl in Elmdale!"

When, however, the adventure of the broken bridge was related to her, she thought it right to show some displeasure.

"I wish, Kate, that you wouldn't put yourself in such difficulties; I shall be obliged to forbid you to go out alone, or at least to go up the hillsides so recklessly."

"There was not any difficulty, aunt; I should only have had to go round by the other bridge, and be late for lunch."

"Then why didn't you go round?"

Kate had no reason to give except one, which, if she had uttered it, would have astonished herself as well as her aunt; some one—with no authority over her at all—had spoken authoritatively, and she had obeyed; that was the simple truth of the matter.

On the next day—the second day after

Henry Dilworth's arrival in Elmdale—she was riding past the Red Cow with Jack Langford, when Jane Dodd stopped her at the gate, and asked her to go in again and see the baby.

"Not that it's so much the baby, after all," Jane explained when they were inside, "as it's the old gentleman staying here who is ill; and I'm sure he ought to see the doctor, but he won't hear of it. He's asked more than once if you'd be looking in to see the baby, which makes me think that if you'd advise him about the doctor he might listen."

"Oh no, Jane, why should he? I couldn't do such a thing," Kate answered quickly.

Meanwhile Jack, who had remained with the horses outside, received a message by a small boy to the effect that the gentleman in the parlour would be glad if he would go in and speak to him. He went with alacrity, having a very distinct suspicion who the gentleman in the parlour might be.

Henry Dilworth was sitting in an arm-chair, with a rug wrapped about his feet. He had a look of great suffering and exhaustion ; and he did not attempt to rise.

"I'm sorry to see you so ill, sir," Jack said, as he went forward.

"I have been so before. It will pass away. Thank you for coming to see me. I am a stranger to you, but I knew your uncle very well."

"Did you indeed, sir? He was a very nice fellow, I suppose."

Jack's manner was genuinely respectful, in a pleasant though rather old-fashioned manner. He was aware that the man before him, if he showed symptoms now of weakness and indecision, had once been stronger than himself both mentally and physically ; it was the decline of a Goliath that he looked upon ; and he admired the giant for what he had been as well as for what he was. He met with frank fearlessness the keen gaze fixed upon him, and he waited to hear more.

"Miss Dilworth is with you, I think?" the stranger said, with some effort.

"She is looking at Mrs. Dodd's baby," Jack replied, with conscientious and commonplace exactness. If he guessed at the elements of a romance in the situation, he was not the one to feed it with fine words.

"Is she fond of children?" Henry Dilworth asked, remembering that his wife had never been so.

"I can't really say," Jack replied; "the mothers are, I suppose, and they get her to look at them."

"She seems to be very good to the poor."

"I don't know that she is; the poor people like her, and the rich too, but she is one of those persons who win gratitude easily; she's so uncommonly pleasant to look at, such a very charming young lady altogether, don't you know?"

"Ah!" said Henry Dilworth, quickly, "you find her so, do you?"

"I should have a curious taste if I didn't, sir, don't you think?"

"She seems quite happy, quite content;" Henry Dilworth went on, without answering his query, "you are with her a great deal, I think. You can tell me if she is so."

"Well, sir, if you want to know, you could find all that out for yourself, I should fancy."

Henry Dilworth's face had flushed a little at Jack's last words, which he fancied conveyed a reproof, but his eye kept clear and cool. He was indifferent to Jack's opinion of him, so long as he satisfied his own conscience. He had only one vulnerable point in the armour of simplicity and strength with which he had long met the world; but he had been struck hard in that one point; it had once been the love of his wife, it was now the love of his daughter. The dissatisfaction of one or the other was the knife which could cut off the magic locks of Samson,

and leave him to stumble blindly—but never ignobly—to his end.

“You think it strange, perhaps, that I should ask such questions. Some day you will know that I am not taking an unwarrantable liberty.”

“I didn’t suppose it. I meant just what I said, that you could find out these things for yourself, sir.”

“I may not have the time or opportunity. I am obliged to you for coming to see me. I wanted to speak to you and look at you.”

“I hope you are satisfied,” Jack said, with a glance of subdued amusement.

“Yes, I think you are an honest man.”

This strange remark was uttered with a quietness that robbed it of its impertinence.

“Is there anything an honest man could do for you, sir?” Jack inquired. “You are here alone and ill.”

“There is certainly nothing that a dishonest man could do,” Henry Dilworth

answered with a slight smile; "and as for you, if there's anything you can do for me, it will be done without my asking."

"I take it as a compliment that you think so," said the younger man gravely.

"Are you here, Jack?" uttered a voice at the door at that moment.

"Yes; come in," he answered, briskly throwing the door open.

Kate stood on the threshold. There was an air of shyness and hesitation about her, but the eyes of the stranger met hers, and drew her forward. They were the eyes of a man who had long been hungry for what he now saw, but who was so evidently sad and limited in hope that even the satisfaction of his desires did not imply happiness.

"I am sorry you are ill," Kate said, as she advanced doubtfully. "I hope getting wet yesterday was not the cause of it?"

"It's a strange thing if it was, for I've been used to all sorts of exposure all my life."

"I hope you will be better soon. Don't you think you ought to see a doctor? Mrs. Dodd thinks so."

"No, thank you; I have been like this before, and know what to do."

"Is there anything we can do for you?" she asked, still with some timidity, and glancing at Jack for encouragement.

"Nothing at all, except to come and see me again."

Kate's face flushed a little, but she went on:

"Is there nothing we could get for you—jelly, or fruit, or soup?"

"No, thank you. I have all I want; unless," he added, with a sudden thought,—"you should make it yourself."

Kate's cheek flushed again, and she answered with unusual humility.

"I'm sorry. I'm afraid I don't know how."

Jack uttered an impatient "Pooh!" and she looked at him with deprecating apology.



"It is of no consequence," said the sick man with a little sigh; "I have all I want."

"Good-bye," said Kate; and then she repeated, "I hope you will be better."

She stood a moment looking at him almost wistfully; she felt herself to be the indirect cause of his illness, and she put down to this circumstance all the humility and desire to please which were contrary to her habitual moods; but she was actually under the influence of his strong character and feeling; and she was vaguely troubled by a sense of the strangeness of the situation, without any recognition of the truth coming near her thoughts.

"Good-bye," he said, and he hoped that she would come forward, and offer her hand; but she did not. She glanced at Jack as if to ask what to do next, and then went out.

Her sudden docility and appealing looks at him seemed to have made less impression on Jack than might have been expected.

He did not take them as a compliment to himself at all. He said to her as she passed out :

"If you'll walk on, I will follow you directly ;" and then he went back to Henry Dilworth.

"Sir," he said, "I don't wish to show any impertinent curiosity, but I can't help having a good idea who you are."

"Then you will keep my secret," was the quiet answer.

"I think that it's a great pity it should be kept. Kate doesn't seem to you all she should be ; but you have her at a disadvantage ; she's true and good underneath."

"I have found no fault with my daughter," was the response, given in a singularly gentle tone.

"No, sir, you haven't. But I think a good deal of her, as perhaps you know ; and I don't take it as a compliment to her that you don't tell her who you are."

"I want to spare her as much as possible."

"She can't have any feelings, sir, that ought to be spared in such a case. You don't understand her. She's been brought up to be what she is, and she has a kind of haughty way with her, I know. But it's very shallow; it isn't an inch deep. And there's nothing she's wished for so much as that you should come here or send for her."

Henry Dilworth's face lighted with surprise.

"Why didn't she tell me?"

"You see for yourself that she's proud; and she thought that you didn't want her."

"Impossible!" said Henry Dilworth, with energy; but he added in another tone, "She hadn't seen me."

"Well, sir? I don't understand."

"You haven't had my experience. No, I will wait. She suspects nothing, and this isn't the moment to shock her by an unpleasant surprise. I'll wait at least until

I am well, then my claim upon her will be simpler."

"I do think you are mistaken, sir. There's no better way of making friends with a woman than being ill and letting her nurse you."

"Not with all women," answered Henry Dilworth, who had his own memories.

"I'm sorry you have formed such a poor opinion of Kate," said Jack persistently; "she doesn't deserve it."

Henry Dilworth smiled at the young man's strange championship.

"At any rate I am much obliged to you for your friendly feeling," he remarked.

"It isn't much to my credit," Jack replied honestly, "seeing how important your influence is likely to be to me. Good-bye, sir, and I hope you'll have changed your mind to-morrow."

He took his hat and departed, overtaking Kate near to her own house. She was lingering in the lane with an anxious and dissatisfied look.

"Did you think me very stupid, Jack?" she asked.

"A nice young colonist you would be!" he growled unmercifully; "couldn't make a little jelly for a sick man."

"I could learn. I hope he won't die. I feel that it's my fault for going down to the broken bridge."

"It was his fault more than yours, I suppose. It's the sort of splendid knight-errantry all about nothing, that ought to be confined to the 'shore of old romance.' But there the ladies themselves always give the necessary care in return, they don't refer the heroes to their cooks."

"Oh, Jack, you aren't kind," said Kate in a low voice.

"Because I'm not sure that you are ready for kindness, or ought to have it."

They had reached the Stepping Stones, and this remark concluded the conversation.

## CHAPTER VII.

“ENOUGH FOR A LIFETIME.”

KATE sat in the drawing-room at the Stepping Stones that evening, her hands idle on her knees, and her mood one of dissatisfaction with herself. Her aunt was dissatisfied too, and expressed her feelings in this way:

“I wish you would get something to do, Kate; I don’t like to see your fingers empty. If you only had a little knitting or crochet in your hand it would be different.”

Kate procured the knitting, but did none of it; her mind was full of other things, and very soon an interruption occurred. It was announced that the doctor had called, and wished to see Miss Leake.

He had, in fact, a grave communication

to make. Mrs. Dodd had become alarmed by the increasing illness of her lodger, and sent for medical help on her own responsibility. The nearest doctor was one who had attended Agnes Dilworth, and prescribed for the childish ailments of Kate. He remembered Henry Dilworth well, and, in spite of the change in his appearance, could not fail to recognize him. He had come now, with his patient's permission, to inform Miss Leake of this unexpected discovery, and to make a request to her.

Miss Leake received his communication with distress and dismay.

"It is quite possible," the doctor observed, "that in a few hours Mr. Dilworth may be very much better or—very much worse. He has had such attacks before, it seems, and got over them quickly; but his strength is broken, he won't stand many of them."

"Yet he is not very old," Miss Leake said—"hardly over sixty."

"He looks much older."

"He used to be very strong. I never heard of him being ill at all; nothing seemed to hurt him."

"He has had a fine constitution; but he has tried it too much, apparently. It might have been better if things had hurt him a little at an earlier stage. But he seems to be broken in more ways than one. He looks dispirited, his temperament is altered; instead of being full of energy and plans for the future, he falls quickly into a kind of quiet abstraction and hardly notices what is said. If I had not known him to have been eminently successful in his later undertakings, warmly appreciated by the geographical societies, and so on, I should say that he was a disappointed man."

"Oh no," Miss Leake declared, "he can't be that. He has always lived the life that suited him best and never failed in any way."

"So I supposed. And he has had no money troubles or family cares? Since



the death of his wife, I mean, of course ; which occurred so long ago that it cannot count."

"None whatever. He has more money than he cares to spend, and he was never ambitious in that way. As to other things, he has been absolutely free to follow his own plans without an anxious thought."

"There must be something eccentric about him, or he wouldn't have come over in such a sudden manner without giving notice."

Miss Leake's countenance flushed at this remark.

"He must come here at once. What would it sound like if he died at the inn?"

"He can't be moved to-night, and he doesn't wish his daughter to be told who he is until he is better. He seems to think it would be a shock to her. He has a really morbid desire to spare her feelings, but at the present moment his wishes must not be opposed. Agitation and vexation would be fatal to him."

"Yet you say that he wants to see her."

"He has an evident longing for it ; and as he may not live until to-morrow, I think that for her own sake his wish should be granted. When she comes to know that he is her father, she will feel it a comfort to have been kind to him."

"But how can I send her without telling her?"

"Leave it to me. With your consent I'll take her and bring her back."

Miss Leake rang the bell, and requested that Miss Dilworth should be sent to her.

"If only he had not come!" she could not help breathing in the moment of waiting ; "it was so very ill-advised."

The doctor looked at her without replying. He had observed that this lady expressed not a single word of sympathy for her brother-in-law, or anxiety for his recovery.

"I begin to understand where the trouble lies," he said to himself. "This

fervent explorer is not such an indifferent father as we have all been led to believe."

Kate came into the room with a look of surprise and inquiry. She glanced first at her aunt, and then at the doctor, who advanced to meet her.

"My dear young lady, are you inclined to do a kind action?" he said, looking into her face.

"If I can," she answered, with a slightly heightened colour.

"Your friend at Mrs. Dodd's is worse, is very ill, and has a fancy to see you. I promised him that, with your aunt's consent, I would bring you."

Kate looked at her aunt wonderingly, and then at him.

"Am I to go?"

"If you will. Put on your things as quickly as you can, and come."

Kate fled upstairs and was down again directly, dressed for the walk.

"That's a good girl," said the doctor, drawing her hand in his arm and patting it

encouragingly; "you've got some of the qualities of a nurse—promptness is one, and silence is another. Have you noticed, Miss Leake, that she hasn't asked a single unnecessary question?"

Miss Leake tried to smile, and didn't succeed very well. But the doctor never insisted on the part he gave to people being properly carried out; he was satisfied if they left him to speak and to act as if he had received the due response.

When Kate was walking by his side down the lane, however, (all unconscious of Miss Leake's anxious face peering through the darkness after her), she abandoned her character for silence by observing:

"It is strange that he should care to see me. But he said that he knew my mother."

"Yes, he was very fond of your mother," the doctor replied heartily.

Kate fell into a reverie then, which lasted until they reached the Red Cow. The doctor's reply agreed with an earlier fancy

of her own. The stranger had been a humble admirer of her mother's years and years ago ; he had never forgotten her, had never married, and coming back at the end of his life to die in his native place, he had taken a strange interest in her daughter. Probably the adoration had been unspoken ; it had been a silent worship of one above his hopes, but it might have been guessed at by her mother's friends ; and now in his old age and suffering it was natural for them to treat his wishes with indulgence.

When Kate entered the room at the Red Cow, she perceived the stranger lying on a couch, wrapped in rugs. His face brightened as he saw her, and he said :

"Thank you for coming."

"I am glad if I can be of any use to you," Kate answered, going forward and offering her hand.

It was for the first time. He took it in both his and held it with a gentle strength, looking at her.

"You are very kind," he said.

"Tut, tut," observed the doctor, with friendly contempt; "she does what she's told, and she'll go on doing it. Now, Miss Dilworth, take that chair by the couch, and put your hand on his forehead; let me feel it—a nice cool hand for a sick room—and sit there until I come back. I have a visit to pay higher up. Don't talk too much. It's soothing treatment the patient wants. Answer anything he asks you, but don't ask questions yourself. That's my business."

He went out, shutting the door after him quietly, though without any appearance of care, and Kate was left alone with the sick man.

For a few moments he lay silent, with his eyes closed, realizing whose hand it was that rested on his forehead as no hand had ever rested before, since perhaps he was a tiny child in his mother's care. He was soothed beyond his hopes by Kate's silent presence, and it was some time before he cared to open his eyes and say to her, "Do you often visit people who are ill?"

"Not in this way, never before," she answered in a low voice.

"Then it must seem strange that I should ask for you, that your aunt should let you come."

"No, they told me—" Kate began in a low voice and then hesitated.

"What did they tell you?" he asked.

"That you were very fond of my mother." Her voice, though soft, was clear and easy to be heard. She knew that if she spoke at all it must be distinctly, that the sick man's attention might not be strained to listen.

His worn features flushed and his eye brightened at her explanation.

"Yes," he replied, "I was very fond of your mother ; and I have come a long way to see her daughter."

"To see me? How strange!"

"Is it strange? I am a lonely man. I have led a lonely life. If I die to-night there is not a creature in the world to whom my death will bring any change or loss. But I should like you to know how

much the thought of you has been to me, and that I thanked and blessed you for your goodness to-night."

"It is nothing," said Kate, wondering that he should speak so strongly. "Is there really no one who would be sorry?"

"I am afraid not—I should say, I hope not. But I don't want to speak of myself; my life is nearly over, and my work, such as it was, done. I like to look at you and to think that you are happy, that your life is beginning well, and that you have all that you want. It is so, is it not?"

"Sir?" she said, doubtfully.

"You are happy, are you not?"

"I have every reason to be," she answered with a little pride, for not to any stranger would she speak of the one thing missing.

"Yes, every reason," he repeated, closing his eyes; and after that he said no more.

Half an hour passed away; the room was dimly lighted; the sound was heard of the river flowing through the darkness outside; now and then a little gust of wind rustled



the leaves of the trees and dashed a branch against the window-pane. Henry Dilworth lay in a strange and peaceful dream. All the past swept before him with its changes and its contradictions, but through it all there was the consciousness of Kate's hand on his forehead, and her eyes shining in the gloom.

"She will be glad that she came to-night, poor child, if the end is to be soon," he thought, as her dress stirred faintly beside him.

The doctor returned with a certain quiet bustle that was characteristic of him; he was quiet for the sake of his patients' nerves and full of cheerful business for the sake of their spirits.

"And how are we?" he inquired, feeling his pulse. "Better, quieter. You are a good nurse, Miss Dilworth; you have behaved nicely; you shall come again."

"Good-bye," said Henry Dilworth, taking his hand from the doctor to give it to Kate. "If I don't see you again you will remember

that I thought it worth while to have come half round the world for the sake of your kindness to me to-night."

"Oh," said Kate, "it is too much to say of such a little thing."

"It is not a little thing to me. I have never had so much before. Perhaps I shall never have so much again. It is enough, I suppose, for a lifetime. Good-bye."

Kate's eyes were full of tears as she left him and went out into the darkness. There was a pathetic history here which she did not understand; for it could not be mere sentiment which made this man, who had appeared so strong and self-contained, speak to her with deep though subdued emotion.

"Look to your feet," observed the doctor, as she stumbled down the step into the garden; "a nurse always sees where she is going, makes no mistakes, and, above all, is not infected by the patient's agitation."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A REVELATION.

THE next morning a message came for Miss Dilworth, to the effect that the gentleman was better, and would be glad to see her in the afternoon.

When, after lunch was over, she walked to the Red Cow, she found him sitting up in an easy-chair, looking pale, certainly, but very different from the sick man of the night before. He greeted her with a subdued smile.

"I knew I should soon be very much better—or worse," he said to her; to-morrow I shall be as well as ever, I daresay."

"I hope you will, indeed," said Kate, and she glanced at some papers lying on the table beside him. He had been looking

at them when she entered, and had drawn them hastily together.

"You have not been trying to write, have you?" she asked.

"Yes, I have; but I must leave it till to-morrow."

"Can I do it for you? You will have letters to send to friends who are anxious to hear from you."

"I have no letters to send, no friends who are anxious to hear."

"How dreadful to be so lonely!"

"I am used to it."

"But you were writing something," she persisted.

"Yes, it was a paper which I promised to a geographical society. I have the notes for it here, but I cannot go on."

"Can't I do it for you?" said Kate quickly; "you might dictate to me."

He smiled at her evident eagerness.

"You don't know how dull it is; it would weary you."

"It wouldn't indeed; I am *very* much interested in geography."

"This is not exactly geography; it is on the habits of some animals."

"I am interested in natural history too, very much indeed. Oh, let me do it!"

"Very well, you can try."

He pushed the pen and ink towards her, and a blank sheet of paper; the written ones he kept in his hand.

She sat down and began to write at his dictation, working carefully and diligently; but evidently the sick man did his part with an effort. His notes were rough ones, and he was unused to composing aloud, or even in the presence of any one else; for this part of his work was the one least congenial to him, and had been adopted somewhat late in life, after his exploring expeditions had reached the ears of some members of a learned society, and induced them to appeal to him for contributions.

Kate noticed the air of weariness and effort with which he put his sentences.

together, and after a time she laid down her pen, saying softly :

“I am not tired, but you are.”

“A little, but it can’t be helped. Good or bad, this paper must be sent away this week. I am much obliged to you for making it possible.”

“But couldn’t you give me the *rough notes*?” said Kate boldly, “and I would put them together and bring them back to you. I have practised composition a little, and it would be easier for you to correct and alter than to dictate it all. I would imitate your style as closely as ever I could.”

He looked at her thoughtfully, and answered :

“You shall try it if you like. But I will dictate the notes instead of handing them to you. That will take a very short time, and I can give you the facts in the right order. Then you can put them into what words you like. So long as it all reads correctly and in a straightforward manner, it will be enough.”

On this new system the work was soon finished, and Kate carried off her raw material in triumph. Her task was simple enough. It was merely to supply the necessary auxiliaries to the verbs, and articles to the nouns; to put pronouns where they were required, and to round the sentences neatly. For example: "habits social, colonies 20 to 30," could be transformed to "their habits are social, and they live in colonies numbering twenty or thirty individuals."

She was, nevertheless, excited by the importance of the undertaking. She shut herself up in her own room, studied White's "Selborne" for an hour to see how the thing could be done in the highest style, and then set conscientiously to work. She wrote the paper several times over before she finished it to her satisfaction, and she was so much absorbed in her task that she resented interruption, and positively declined to go out riding the next morning with Jack.

"What a thing it is to become all at once a distinguished scientific writer!" he remarked sarcastically. "I suppose that henceforth an ignorant person like myself will hardly ever be admitted to your learned society?"

"You may come with me this very afternoon if you like, when I take the paper back."

"I wouldn't for the world intrude on that great zoological interview," he retorted; "but if you can tell me when it's likely to end, I will call for you, and bring you home afterwards."

Kate set out that afternoon in high spirits for the Red Cow, with her precious manuscript in her hand.

She found Henry Dilworth walking about the garden, waiting for her with an eagerness almost as great as her own, though the cause was different.

"I hope it will do," she said, as they went in together, and she put her manuscript in his hands.



When they reached the parlour, he opened the packet and turned the papers over, while she watched him anxiously. He appeared to be looking at the writing rather than at the composition; and indeed the carefully-formed letters, like those which had come to him in Australia from his "affectionate daughter Kate," were more interesting to him than the words about zoological facts.

"Will you read it to me?" he said, giving the manuscript back to her. Then he sat down on the other side of the table, and shaded his face from her view with his hand.

She began to read, at first with a nervously trembling voice, but afterwards clearly and well. It disappointed her to notice that he evidently followed her with difficulty, as if his thoughts were elsewhere. Once or twice he fell into a fit of abstraction, and had to ask her to read a portion over again. He was particular, however, in his corrections, and several statements

which she had misunderstood he put in their right form.

When she had finished he expressed his approbation warmly.

"I couldn't have done it nearly so well myself," he said.

Her face flushed with pleasure at the praise.

"I am so glad you like it," she answered. "I tried to do my best; but it was new to me. I dare say I might improve."

"You have done very well indeed," he said smiling and turning the papers over in his fingers again; "this is better than making jelly."

"I tried to do it well," she said in a low pleased voice, "because it is what I have thought—what I have always wished to do for my father."

"For your father?"

He put the papers down on the table, and she noticed that the thin but powerful hand which held them was trembling.

"Yes, my father is very clever. He finds out many things of this sort, and I have always thought I might help him in writing about them."

"Then you have thought about your father?"

"Could I do anything else?" she asked.

"You have thoughts of being with him, of working for him?"

She looked at him with a proud surprise.

"My great hope is that he may let me help him some day; my great pride is that I belong to him whether he wants my help or not. You do not know my father."

"Do you know him yourself—Kate?"

He spoke in a voice low and hoarse with emotion, and leaned over the table towards her.

"Sir?" she said, a vague trouble in her face, as she drew back a little. "I don't understand you."

"Dear child, dear daughter Kate, don't you *know* me?"

She flushed to the roots of her hair, and then turned pale, and rose trembling to her feet.

"I don't understand you," she said. "What does it mean? Oh——*Jack!*"

For Jack had passed the window at the moment and she heard his step in the passage. As he came in she turned to him with a breathless appeal.

"Jack," she said, "it isn't true? *That isn't my father?*"

Henry Dilworth had risen when she rose; he sat down now suddenly as if some one had struck him a heavy blow, and he put one hand before his eyes.

"It is enough," he said, in a quiet voice, which was heard distinctly enough in the silence; "she thinks I could tell her a lie."

There was a pause, as in the moment after a great catastrophe. Kate was stupefied by bewilderment, surprise, and disap-

pointment. *That* was her father, then, the man whom she had patronized and condescended to be kind to: whom she had mistaken for some one in a different sphere, to whom her friendship had seemed a privilege, her visits an honour. *That was* her father whom she must love and live for. She had liked this old man, and been interested in him, but she was seized with a shocked reluctance at the revelation of their close relationship.

What Henry Dilworth thought there is not any need to say.

Jack had not spoken. Kate knew from his silence that it must be true. She understood all at once why the doctor had brought her here, and her aunt had permitted her to come. She stood there speechless and petrified; the shock of her own emotion rendered her blind or indifferent to the emotion of others. At last Henry Dilworth took his hand away from his face and spoke quietly.

"Dear child," he said, "I did not mean

to shock or startle you. That was why I waited; that was why I thought of going away without telling you at all. But the time seemed to have come; and you said you wished to be with me—that was because you did not know me. It is not your fault. It is only as—I thought it might be.”

“Kate,” said Jack, when there had been a moment’s pause, and she did not speak, “why don’t you wake up? Are you made of stone? And this,” he added with a gesture of contemptuous anger, “is the woman I tried to teach to love me! She has no love in her.”

“Hush!” said Henry Dilworth, quickly; “don’t speak harshly to her. Don’t you see that it is all unintentional—and therefore sincere? Dear child, do not be afraid; come round here and look at me. How cold your hands are! You had been hoping and believing something very different. The truth is like that often, Kate; not what we hope, not what we

wish, but the truth, and we must face it. It is not your fault. You thought of me, you loved me when I was a long way off; you will love me again perhaps in the same way. But for myself, dear child, I love you better for having seen you. You have done your best, you have tried to be good, and I shall remember it all. I shall never blame you; don't think it. And I do not ask you to forgive me for the trouble I have brought into your life, because it is not my will that God, having given me a daughter like you, has not given to her such a father as she would have. You will think of that afterwards. I am glad you were good and kind to me—before you knew. You will be glad too. Did I not tell you the night before last that it was perhaps enough for a lifetime? No one shall ever hear me say that it was not enough. Now, Mr. Langford—Jack—will you take her home?"

She had stood looking at him in a stupid bewilderment while he held her hands and

spoke to her gently. Now, when he let them go, she turned to Jack with a troubled face.

“I am sorry—if I have done wrong.”

“Do right, then,” was the brief reply.

She turned to Henry Dilworth and looked at him wistfully, hesitatingly; some softer feeling stirred within her, and struggled against the shy reluctance, the proud shrinking that she had from any familiar kindness—a touch or a caress—to a stranger.

His eyes met hers, with a look in which there was not any reproach.

“Good-bye, dear child,” he said; “you will go home now.”

“Good-bye,” she said, moving slowly away, and murmuring again, “I am sorry——”

She paused near the door and looked round with a doubtful, troubled face, as if dissatisfied at this strange ending of a strange interview.

He smiled and put out his hand in



answer to her look, speaking softly and suddenly:

“Kiss me, Kate, before you go.”

Her eyes dilated, as if with a return of the first surprise. She went forward in a mechanical obedience, but before she reached him she dropped her head on her hands and burst into a passion of tears.

“Not now,” she said; “to-morrow; I will do it to-morrow.”

Henry Dilworth’s hand fell again on his knee; those tears of Kate, the first he had seen her shed since she was a child, and drawn from her by the mere thought of giving him that tenderness for which he had longed so much, struck him a second cruel blow where the first had been enough. His hands trembled, but he kept his voice steady, and spoke as quietly as before:

“Yes, *to-morrow*; to-morrow will be the best. Now, sir, will you take her away *at once*?”

His voice was that of a man with whom

there must be no more trifling. Jack, who had said nothing for fear of making a bad matter worse, took Kate's arm and led her from the room.

When they were gone, and the door shut, Henry Dilworth folded his arms on the table and put his head down on them silently. He felt like a man who has been sorely stricken and who has not a word to utter in protest.



## CHAPTER IX.

### REPENTANCE.

IN silence Kate and Jack walked the greater part of the way back to the Stepping Stones. Kate's mind was in a tumult of mingled disappointment and remorse. Her own first impression of astonishment, incredulity, dismay, still was uppermost in her sensations; but dimly under her youthful wayward impulse of resistance there was the consciousness of a suffering greater than her own, and the perception of a nature, beside which her own capricious identity seemed a trifling thing. It was possible that the grief which she had created, and then ignored, was as large as the patience with which it had been endured; and her own disappointment was, on the contrary, as mean and as shallow as

her temper had proved itself to be unreliable in the moment of trial. Was it possible that she, who had so long been proud of her father's character, should be ashamed of his manners? And had not even these, in true refinement and gentleness, far surpassed her own? What was there in him to arouse disappointment or excuse unkindness? Nothing ignorant, nothing coarse, nothing vicious. He had, on the contrary, qualities the reverse of all these. It was merely the absence of a certain trick of manner and note of voice which had filled her with protest against his claim upon her. It was the crudest and most stupid of class prejudices which had induced her to embitter the much-desired moment of meeting, and to wound cruelly one whose whole life was a long claim to her reverence and affection. Was, then, her boasted freedom from conventionality only a miserable conceit? Had she failed in the very first opportunity of serving her father, and of sacrificing her feelings to his?

"Jack," she said as she drew near her home, "have I behaved very badly?"

"You have proved all your talk about sacrifices for your father to be unmitigated humbug, and shown yourself to have less feeling than I supposed any woman could possess," he answered in a tone of dry disgust.

His strong words flushed her face, and raised her head an inch higher; for her spirit of self-esteem was not altogether broken.

"You speak very plainly," she answered.

"Your actions spoke more plainly still just now. This is woman's gentleness, tenderness, tact, self-abnegation, and so on, I suppose. I can only say that he would be a hard man who could surpass it in selfish cruelty. A grey-headed man, and ill, and your father! But I presume that your fine feelings must be humoured at all costs!"

"He was such a stranger. I was so taken by surprise; and after all," she added

with an air of vexation approaching anger in its intensity, "it is not you who should blame me. You always wanted me to give up the idea of devoting myself to my father. From your point of view you ought to be glad that we are not likely to agree."

"Is it so, indeed?" asked Jack with ironical politeness. "It did not occur to me that my own advantage might accrue from the mortification and misery of that old man whom we have left behind us. Nor does it, perhaps, occur to you that no man in his senses would care to marry a woman who could not love her own father. Regan and Goneril were, permit me to suggest, already wives when their filial treatment of Lear reached its climax."

"Jack!"—she stood still with flaming eyes—"you dare to insult me, and care to do it."

"I express my own feelings, simply, and according to your example. It is, apparently, the stamp of polite society. Mr.

Dilworth, you may remember, subdued his. Or perhaps he hadn't any feelings? They remain *our* aristocratic privilege!" He took off his hat with grave courtesy, and walked away.

Kate turned into the garden gate, and went straight up to her own room. She could not bear to see or to speak to anyone at the moment. Two ideas filled her thoughts overpoweringly: she had cruelly mortified her father, and had been bitterly mortified by her lover in return. But the first idea gradually grew and obliterated the second. The thought of the old man whom she had left alone at the inn took fast hold of her, and would not let her go. He was her father, her hero, the one person she had longed for, had intended to devote her life to. It was he whom she had suspected of being unjustly treated by her aunt, perhaps negligently loved by her mother. But what was their injustice, or their negligence, to her harsh unkindness? It had never been in her aunt's power, it

could never have been her mother's inclination, to hurt him as she had done. Her mother had at least married him, had taken his name, and linked her life to his; and, however negligent and unappreciative her tenderness might have been, it must have been tenderness of a certain sort, passive and receptive, if not passionate and generous.

It had, then, been left for his daughter—the daughter who had so long cherished the ambition of becoming his comfort and compensation—to strike him the cruellest blow of all. She understood now how it had always been possible for smaller natures than his own to get the advantage when their interests had clashed with his. His strength was shown, in his dealings with such natures, chiefly by his gentleness, and his love by patience. Who could doubt that his feelings were the stronger at the moment when she was giving full course to hers? She remembered his silence, his hidden countenance; he had neither spoken



nor looked at her until he was altogether master of himself; he had answered *her* attack by the sheathing of his own weapons.

And it was this man whom she had slighted, grieved, wounded with the cruel darts of a petty pride; it was his large heart that she had struck at in her shallow fastidiousness; while, all the same, he remained the one being up to the level of whose high principles it had been her ambition to live. She was grieved, ashamed, regretful. Never, never could she undo that afternoon's work, and give to her father a love without the memory of any bitterness or disappointment. What must he think of her, even while treating her with his large indulgence, and sparing her the shadow of any reproach?

He had said that it was perhaps enough for a lifetime, enough to content him always, that she should have sat for half an hour with her hand upon his head. The pitifulness of it overcame her as she

thought of it, and she burst into passionate tears, no longer selfish and rebellious, but full of repentance and a desire to atone.

"How *can* I atone?" she said to herself with biting reproach. "Whatever I may give to him, he has more to give me in return. There is no possible atonement, except to take his generous kindness, and let him ignore my miserable meanness."

She had begged to be excused from going down to dinner, and had rejected her aunt's offer of *sal volatile* and *eau-de-cologne*. She only asked to be left alone.

"I am sure something is the matter," Miss Leake remarked to Mrs. Dewhurst, "for Kate wouldn't open the door or let me see her. I believe she suspects the truth about her father, and is already troubled about it. Why didn't he go away as soon as ever he was fit? Hasn't he eyes to see for himself how unsuitable it is that he should stay here? Or why did he come at all?"

Miss Leake's anxious desire to secure to

herself the care of Kate's life, growing through the years, had ended by making her capable of an injustice which she would have scorned in earlier days. She had come to regard the father's claim as unreasonable and importunate, a thing to be secretly evaded or openly resisted. His desires were as nothing to her, his comfort was a thing beside the question. *Why* should he interfere when Kate was well and happy? This was a question which she asked with actual sincerity; for she had succeeded in blinding herself to the true view of the case, and to all the rights of her brother-in-law.

Meanwhile, as dusk came on, Kate, sitting alone in her own room, made up her mind. She resolved to wait no longer, but to undo at once the evil she had done. She would go to her father and beg him to forgive her, and to love her, according to the largeness of his own virtue, and not the narrowness of her deserts.

She put on her hat, and stole out quietly, anxious that none should see her, and ask her questions. When she was reconciled to her father she would not care what might be asked of her about the matter. She even hoped to bring him back to the Stepping Stones that night, and to take him into the drawing-room to her aunt in triumph. Her face flushed in happy anticipation of it. She was full of impatience now, to take possession of him, to sit beside him, and make him talk to her. The look in his eyes when he said good-bye haunted and troubled her. She wanted to efface its memory by a happier experience. She had turned from him with shrinking coldness, but she was prepared to atone for her error now by rushing into the opposite extreme. She was full of the enthusiasm of youth, which desires and expects to change circumstances as rapidly as it changes its own moods, and hopes to undo mistakes as fast as it perceives them.

The way to the Red Cow had never seemed to her so long as it did that night. She went onwards with ever-increasing haste; beneath the trees, between the hills, now near the river, now farther from it. The shadows of evening lay upon the land: the hollows of the mountains were filling with darkness; the voice of the river was waxing in strength, as silence spread over the fells and grew in the leafy coverts.

She reached the little inn at last, and entered breathlessly. She was going to ask for Mr. Dilworth, but remembered that he would not be known by that name; she said, therefore, that she wanted to see "the gentleman."

"Well, to be sure!" said Jane, coming forward in the dusty passage; "what a pity you didn't know! But he's left a letter for you, and another for Miss Leake—to be given to the post-boy. The post-boy hasn't passed, has he, James? Then bring the letters here. I suppose you might as

well have them now, Miss Dilworth, as wait until morning."

Kate stood in astonishment and perplexity, but she did not ask any questions. When the letters were brought to her, she took them eagerly, examined the outside to see if the writing was what she expected, yet dreaded, to see; then went to the door, and opened hers, reading it by the waning light.

"Dear child," it began, "I have thought it best to go away. We loved each other when we did not meet, and we shall do so again. Your letters have always been precious to me, and you will write to me often, oftener than before; that is all I want from you. I have not left you alone all these years because I was careless about seeing you, but only because it seemed to be for your happiness. So it still seems, although I would not believe it until I saw it with my own eyes. I know, dear Kate, that if I stayed in England you

would be a dutiful daughter to me, but it would not be for the happiness of either of us. I cannot say more to-night; I pray God with all my heart to bless you, dear child, and to give to you by other means all that tender care which it is not permitted to me to bestow on you.

“Your loving father,

“HENRY DILWORTH.”



## CHAPTER X.

### ON THE HEIGHTS OF CRINKLE FELL.

KATE read the letter twice, and turned it over in her fingers to be sure that there was no other, no relenting word. Then she looked at Jane, who waited near her.

“Has he—gone?”

“Very near three hours ago. He packed up his bag, and looked at the railway guide. There wasn’t a train from the station to-night, but the last coach hadn’t gone to Oakdale. So he said he would take that, and go on from there by the early morning train. I made free to tell him he wasn’t fit for such a journey, but he said he was quite well now, and out of the doctor’s hands. He left those letters for you and Miss Leake, and another besides. This is the other. It’s a big one.”



Kate looked at the packet pointed out to her. It was carefully folded and addressed to the secretary of the geographical society. She did not know that it was indorsed, with paternal pride strange at the moment, "Prepared by my daughter, from notes supplied by me, and written in her hand."

This was the one service which he could boast that she had done for him; he could not send it out of his hands unrecorded.

"And has he actually *gone*?" Kate asked incredulously.

"Yes, by the last coach, as I said."

Kate looked out into the dusky valley, where the shadow of the mountains lay darkly. He had gone beyond the mountains, out of her reach, and she was left behind in the shadow. That day had held the key to her happiness; with the coming of night a door was shut in her face which might open no more.

She turned to Jane with sudden passion:

“Why did you let him go? He was my father!”

“Your father? I am sure we—none of us—thought of such a thing,” answered Jane in amazement. “No one told us. But if we had known—begging your pardon—I don’t see how we could have kept him here, when he wanted to go.”

“No, no, of course you couldn’t,” Kate answered abstractedly. Already her burst of impatience was over; she had forgotten it, and was pondering on the possibility of doing something immediately, to put right this very wrong condition of affairs. She was not prepared to let her fate or her father take her at the first hasty word, and leave her to repent it for the rest of her life.

“Will you get some paper for me, and a light?” she said at last to the attentive and curious Jane.

When the necessary appliances were brought to her, she sat down, and scribbled the following note:

“DEAR JACK,—

I am at Jane Dodd's. I came to see my father, and persuade him to go back with me. I find that he has *gone away*, to Oakdale, by coach. He intends to leave Oakdale by the first train in the morning. He told Jane so. Of course this must not be. I am going over to Oakdale now, by the mountain path. I know my way perfectly well, and shall be there in less than three hours. I shall come back with him to-morrow, or, if he won't come, I shall go with him wherever he goes. Certainly I will never come back without him. Aunt Susie does not know that I am here. If I send home she will be alarmed and do something foolish; so I am writing to you instead. I inclose a note left for her by my father. There was another for me. Will you take this to her, and explain what it means, and what I have done? Don't let her be frightened.

“KATE.”

She gave this commission to Jack with-

out the least hesitation, in spite of the unfriendly manner of their parting. It seemed to her at that moment a matter of small importance what Jack thought of her, and she was sure of his good-natured acquiescence in any wish she might express, his readiness to do any service she might ask from him. Their quarrel could stand over meanwhile until some more suitable occasion occurred on which to remember it.

She inclosed her own note and the one for Miss Leake in one envelope, and addressed the whole to J. Langford, Esq., Elmdale Hall. Then she gave them to Jane Dodd, and asked her to send them on to Mr. Langford in the course of an hour.

"I am going further up the valley," she said, for she knew that to express her intentions further would have called forth tiresome remonstrances.

She started from the inn with a quick step, anxious to get as far as possible before darkness set in. The road over the moun-

tain was simple enough; the moon would rise in the course of an hour and a half; she said to herself that she was committing no imprudence, and had nothing to fear.

When she left the shaded lane, and began to skirt the bare hillside, she seemed to have gained a fresh accession of twilight; but soon she had to plunge into a gully down which a stream tumbled, and follow its course for some distance. The stream was hurrying down in swift swirls and sudden leaps, as if it had an enemy behind it which it desired to escape. But there was no enemy visible on the farther heights, only silence and solitude, and the solemn stillness of mountain masses revealing themselves from moment to moment as Kate made her way upwards.

She left the stream after some time, and turned towards the left, over the swell of hillside. When she had made the climb over this trackless rounded slope, she would dip downwards to a little sheet of water called Ill-Head Tarn. She would then have

passed the highest point of her journey, and must make her way down a stony valley, with a stream for guide and company, until she reached Oakdale.

As she scrambled over the rugged breast of the mountain, she became aware that a little slip of feathery cloud, delicate as a bridal veil, and hardly larger, was streaming over the nearer top of Crinkle Fell. Behind her, the last faint light of sunset lingered in the sky; before her, in the east, were the masses of Crinkle Fell, and the little fluttering veil which might have been dropped by some heavenly messenger recently alighted there. The wind was from the east.

"It doesn't matter," Kate remarked to herself—as a dales-woman the significance of that little cloud coming up before the wind was not lost to her—"when once I reach Ill-Head Tarn I can't go wrong; I have only to follow the water down hill."

But the bit of gossamer on the crest of Crinkle Fell was proving itself elastic, and

spreading rapidly over the mountain front. It was as yet thin enough to be seen through, and the gaunt ribs of the giant hill looked gaunter behind its white transparency, more rugged in contrast to its soft beauty.

Kate climbed onwards as rapidly as her limbs would take her. This part of her journey was the one for which she needed light. She must take the curve of the hill at a certain point, or she would not find the little hollow leading down to the Ill-Head Tarn. If she turned too much to the right she might lose herself among the stony buttresses of Lang Pike; if she wandered too far to the left, she would find herself on the heights of Crinkle Fell, with its precipitous front below her.

A stony mountain way seems longer, when it is being followed in a race with gathering clouds, than when it is leisurely taken in the pleasant light of a long summer day; and now the distances seemed strangely to lengthen out, and the far-off landmarks to retreat before Kate's hastening feet. The

little mist on the summit proved to be the edge of a great and advancing cloud army. The mountain barrier had held it back for some time, but the crest once surmounted, it dropped heavily over in a rolling mass, plunged into the hollows, filled up the cavities, charged the buttresses, and rapidly covered the whole landscape with a white darkness.

Independently of its danger, the mist was not a pleasant incident in a mountain climb. It chilled the air, covered the clothing with moisture, and penetrated the lungs. Its effects were distressing as well as perplexing to the traveller. Outside the masses of mist, a faint moonlight was beginning to glimmer and take the place of departed day; inside was chillness, blindness, and danger, and Kate was the only human being in the treacherous fleecy folds.

She made her way onwards bravely. When she started on her expedition, she had not realized that it might bring her into actual danger; she had been glad to



face the mere loneliness and fatigue of the journey, that she might prove to her father what she could do for his sake. She hoped to convince him that, in spite of her despicable conduct that afternoon, she was no fine lady afraid to soil her clothes or tire her limbs on his behalf. Now it seemed that she had ventured into real peril for his sake ; but she hoped yet to win his praise rather than his blame for her attempt.

It seemed to her after a time, as she continued to clamber over rocky hindrances which increased in size every moment, that she ought to be getting near the tarn ; the ground should before this have begun to spread out towards the level top of the pass, from which she would drop to the edge of the water. Instead of that, the ascent was getting steeper, and the ground more broken. She began to fear that she had wandered too far to the left, therefore she turned a little towards the right now, hoping to remedy her mistake in this manner ; and presently, to her great satisfaction, she

found herself descending. But very soon the descent proved as much too steep as the ascent had been, and the downward scramble was so difficult that she was obliged to cling to the rocks with her hands in many places. She was more convinced than ever that she had wandered too far to the left, had climbed much too high, and would now have a very steep and difficult descent to make before she could reach the shore of the tarn.

It was an unpleasant situation, especially as she could only see the ground a few feet before her, and had no means of knowing whether she was only plunging into farther difficulties by going farther down.

At intervals the clouds became less dense, and wan ghosts of moonlight wandered through their folds. A moment came at last when Kate was standing on a ledge of rock, with her hand on a higher ledge, uncertain whether to go farther or to return upon her steps. A rift in the clouds gave a chilly blue light; the mist parted at her

feet, and revealed to her—not the shores of the lonely tarn, but a dark hollow, lying hundreds of feet below, with broken rocks striking steeply down into it. She was not above Ill-Head Tarn at all, nor anywhere near it; she was on the upper slope of the precipices which formed the eastern front of Crinkle Fell.

There was no longer any doubt what to do. She must make her way upwards again while it was yet possible to her. Even in the daylight it is difficult to retrace the steps of a descent amid broken crags, which offer a different apparent shape from every different point of view; in the mist she found it impossible to go back just the way she had come.

The rift in the clouds had closed again, and Kate could only choose her way step by step. Here and there the crags among which she climbed were separated by streams of shingle, treacherous bits of ground which she had to pass warily, because a slip there might have taken her far down, possibly

over the edge of the lurking precipice below.

She was wondering whether it would be wisest to give up altogether, to sit down in the mist and wait until morning, when a little accident decided the question. She made a false step on the shingle, slipped, recovered herself, and with a desperate effort landed on a ledge beside it. But her ankle was twisted, and her hands were bleeding; it was impossible to go farther. She crept to the back of the rocky shelf, sat down there, and prepared to be patient.

She was not sorry now that she had told Jack exactly where she was going. She supposed that it would do her no harm to remain where she was until daylight released her. Rest would remove the pain in her ankle and also restore her somewhat exhausted strength, and in the morning she could go on. It was very cold, to be sure, and decidedly unpleasant not to know how near she was to a precipice, or how difficult it might be to extricate herself from her

present position. She was called upon to show endurance and courage; and she would try not to fail in these qualities—but she could not help remembering Aunt Susie's foolish tendency to anxiety with some comfort; she could not help hoping that her friends might not have accepted her departure with that philosophic calm which she had recommended to them.



## CHAPTER XI.

### WHAT THE NIGHT BROUGHT.

LATE at night Henry Dilworth sat in the inn at Oakdale. There was no light in the room, and through the window he could see the water of the lake shining in the moonlight, and the trees black against the margin. Above them rose the massive lower limbs of Crinkle Fell and its giant comrades, but a white rolling mist hid their crests.

The road stretched past the inn, towards the lake in one direction, to the Langstone Pass in another. Coaches and pedestrians had long since left the highway deserted; and yet there was the sound of a horse's hoofs on the lonely road, and the horse was coming fast. When it reached the inn door its rider sprang from the saddle, and

called out to the servant who advanced to meet him, "Has a lady come here over the mountains to-night?"

"No, sir, no lady has arrived at all since morning."

"Is Mr. Dilworth here—a gentleman who came by coach from Elmdale?"

Henry Dilworth stepped into the passage.

"I am here, Mr. Langford. Do you want me?"

"Is you daughter with you, sir?"

"Kate? No. I left her in Elmdale. I have not seen her since she went away with you."

"Will you read this, sir? And then we must look for her, if she isn't here. She started to follow you—from the Red Cow: she hasn't come back into Elmdale, and you see that the mountains are covered with mist."

Henry Dilworth took the letter and read; then he handed it back to Jack, and looked up at Crinkle Fell.

"Yes," he said, "the mists are on the mountain. She has not been able to find her way down."

He walked back into the passage, took his hat and stick and a travelling cloak, felt in his pocket for a flask which should be there, and returned to the door, where Jack stood giving information and directions to the landlord.

"Mr. Langford," said Henry Dilworth, "you will follow me as soon as you can, with the guides (there are two here that I've been talking to), lanterns, and a rope or two. I won't wait. I am going straight on."

"Impossible," said Jack ; "you must not go alone."

"I'll take the dog with me," he answered, calling to a fine foxhound with which he had already made friends. "I know the mountain well. I shan't lose myself. I'm used to bigger deserts than Crinkle Fell."

He did not look a man with whose actions it was easy to interfere, as he stood erect in the doorway, an air of resolution brac-



ing his limbs and animating his features ; but Jack ventured on another remonstrance. Henry Dilworth did not wait to hear the end of it, he strode out into the moonlight, whistled to the dog, and disappeared in the shadow of the trees.

“ We must lose no time in following him,” said Jack. “ He’s been very ill, and is about as fit to be on the mountains as his daughter. Are they getting the things we want ? And where are the men ? ”

Henry Dilworth’s long strides were of a sort not easy to surpass. He was a trained walker, trained both to speed and endurance, and excitement brought back for a time his former energy. Without any hesitation he took the path to Ill-Head Tarn, and soon plunged into the mist clinging about the buttresses of Crinkle Fell. He felt sure that if Kate was lost on the mountain it must be somewhere beyond the tarn ; from that landmark the stream was an unerring guide to the valley ; therefore, until he reached the dark water, lying gloomily

still among the crags, no time need be lost in investigations to the right or to the left. He contented himself with whistling shrilly every few minutes, and listening for any answering sound through the mist.

When once he had reached the tarn and passed it, the position became more difficult and uncertain. He made his way onwards, however, in the path which she ought to have taken, uttering his signal-whistles as he went. It occurred to him, as the best thing to be hoped for, that as soon as she found herself perplexed in the mist, she might have sat down to wait for help; in which case she would not be far from the proper path. He soon found, however, that the mist was thinning before him; that, in fact, he was reaching the edge of it; for it did not extend nearly so far down on the west as on the east side of the mountain. It was certain, then, that Kate had gone astray in the comparatively short bit of ground between the edge of the mist and the shore of the

tarn. She would already, he decided, have begun to bend to the left before she reached the mist; and she could not have wandered to the right afterwards without crossing a deep gully, where she could not have failed to perceive her mistake, and would undoubtedly have turned back again.

Therefore she must be looked for to the left, somewhere in that ascending slope which climbed to the precipitous front of Crinkle Fell. Henry Dilworth acted on this idea, and, turning back, made his way to the left, up the mountain-side. In spite of the thickness of the mist at this point he felt no danger of being lost in his turn. He had something of that sense of locality which has been attributed to dogs and other animals, a distinct consciousness of the direction in which he was looking, a keen memory for the turns he had taken, a close observation of any small indication in the ground around him.

He climbed, therefore, the steep and

broken declivity, which he knew—as he mounted higher and left the tarn behind him—to be the crest of the dangerous upper slope of the precipices. These were down on his right hand, and on that side he felt the peril to be: for if Kate had wandered always farther to the left, she would have merely strayed down the grassy western slopes of Crinkle Fell into the valley above Elmdale; she would have met with no difficulty in that direction, and must soon have emerged from the mist at a spot whence she could easily make her way home again.

If, however, she had kept along the top of the ridge, she might still be far in front; or if she had discovered her error of bending too much to the left, and tried to remedy it by an abrupt turn to the right, she would have found herself on those upper slopes where every step led her into greater peril.

It was possible that she might have already made a false step, and fallen; but

Henry Dilworth was too much accustomed to live in the presence of a possible catastrophe to let the probability of one take possession of his thoughts, when those thoughts could be better employed. He kept all his faculties fully occupied in looking and listening; he whistled often, and stood still at times waiting for a reply.

He was already more than a mile from the tarn when he fancied that a faint voice answered his signal. The dog, who had kept close to his heels, sniffing the mist suspiciously, now plunged down the rocks to the right, and Henry Dilworth took the same direction. He whistled again; and again some one answered him. This time he knew it to be Kate's voice unmistakably, rising from some spot below him.

He shouted to her to keep her place, on no account to attempt to come to meet him. Then he dropped from ledge to ledge and soon reached the shelf of rock where Kate was waiting.

She rose to her feet, and gazed through the mist incredulously.

"Is it *you*? How did you know? Oh, how good it was of you to come."

"I was sure to come," he said simply.

She looked at him wonderingly, still half ashamed and half afraid.

"Will you forgive me?" she said; "I didn't mean it. I think I was made to speak as I did. Forgive me, and love me again—father!"

She flung her arms round his neck as he stood looking at her gently, and hid her face on his breast.

"You will not forgive me," she said with something like a sob; "you are angry. You will never forget."

"Dear child, I never was angry, not for a moment. You were not to blame." He loosed her arms from about his neck gently, and sat down. The emotion which he had kept in check before, overcame him now, though he gave little sign of it;

it brought back that pain to his heart and that weakness to his limbs which he had felt more than once before.

He sat down slowly and carefully, like a man uncertain of his own strength; then, seeing a look of pain and perplexity on his daughter's face, he smiled at her, and drew her on his knee.

"I am tired, Kate. I will rest a little."

"You were not fit to come," she said with passionate repentance, as she kissed the hands that clasped hers: "you have been ill; and it is my fault that you have had to come. I am always, always in the wrong."

"No, dear, no. But you want some one to guide you. You must never do this again, even if I am not here to tell you."

"But you will keep me with you, will you not? You will never send me away again, or go away without me?"

"Not unless you wish it, Kate. I came home for your sake only."

"Do you know that I was coming to

Oakdale to look for you? I couldn't bear to let another night go by without telling you that I was sorry, that I loved you, that it was all a sort of dreadful mistake. Will you ever, ever love me, and trust me again?"

"I never ceased to do it, dear child," he answered, stroking her hair caressingly; but all the time he was conscious of her danger and of his weakness. He must by some means get her up to the top of the cliff. He only waited till he felt strong enough to make the effort.

Kate had, on the other hand, almost forgotten where they were. She was following out her own thoughts, and trying to satisfy her own anxieties.

"You will never leave me," she repeated; "it was not because you wished it—that you left my mother?"

Henry Dilworth put his hand against his heart, and breathed more slowly and painfully.

"Child," he said, "you hurt me with



your questions. Take on trust what you do not understand, and believe that I will never leave you while you love me—and want me.”

She murmured some apology, vexed at her own selfish vehemence and preoccupation. He hardly seemed to hear her, but rose to his feet, and said quietly, “I am rested. We will go on now.”

She clung to his arm, however, and answered, “I don’t know if I can ; I hurt my ankle in getting here.”

“That’s unfortunate. Others are looking for us ; but they may not come down here. It’s an awkward place you have got into. I must take you at least to the top of the cliff.”

“Could you leave me and go to tell them ? ”

“I will never leave you till you are safe. Have I waited all these years to have my daughter for my own again, and shall I leave her here, in this place, after all ? ”

He laughed a little at the idea.

"Then we will wait here," said Kate ;  
"I am not afraid now you have come."

"Nay," he said quickly, "I have used my strength recklessly enough all my life. Must I spare it for the first time, now, when it will be of some use to you? I can carry you very easily, but you must hold fast in the difficult places where I have to use my hands."

She obeyed him, having perfect confidence in his power and judgment. She had always heard of him, and thought of him, as an exceptionally strong man physically, and she had no idea how much his strength had failed him of late. He had been ill certainly, but that was from cold, she thought ; he had recovered ; and as he gave no sign of painful effort she was not aware that he was making any now, in his determination to save her. He made his way upwards very slowly and cautiously, taking advantage of every bit of rock or stone, planting one foot

firmly before moving the other, and so passing safely over difficult places. As he went on, however, one arm clasping her, the other free to help him in climbing, he began to be more and more conscious of fatigue and faintness. A momentary giddiness kept him clinging to a rock longer than was necessary to make his footing sure ; a trembling in his limbs warned him not to step on uncertain places where a slip would be dangerous ; but he pressed on slowly and silently ; for the top was not far off, although he was approaching it by a more oblique and, therefore, a longer route than the one by which he had descended. When he had reached a spot where all the worst difficulties seemed to be over, he stopped suddenly, stooped that Kate might regain her footing, and relieve him of her weight, then he stood quite still, steadying himself by a piece of jutting rock.

“I can go no farther,” he said after a moment ; “we must wait.”

"You have done too much," she said remorsefully. "You have been ill so lately."

"I must rest, that is all. They will find us here—in time. We are not so far out of the way now, and it is quite safe above, only rather steep. If no one came you could make your way to the top on your hands and knees. But they will come. We have only got to wait."

He sat down and leaned back against the rock behind him; then he drew Kate on his knee again, and she nestled close to him with her head on his shoulder.

"It is cold for you, dear child," he said, as the penetrating mist drove past him, and his caressing hand felt the moisture clinging to her hair; "you are not used to such exposure."

"I am very well, I am very warm," she answered; "it is you who will suffer, I know. It shall never be so again. You will let me take care of you afterwards;

won't you? and make you happy and well?"

"You shall do what you like," he answered; but even now his thoughts were hardly with his words; he was pondering on the position, and wondering how to make it less injurious to her. He remembered the flask in his pocket, and, drawing it out, told her to drink half of its contents.

"It will revive you, and keep you warm," he said.

She obeyed without a word; and then he wrapped his cloak round her, and drew her closer into the warmth of his arms.

"How kind you are! how good you are!" she whispered. "What a pity to have been without you so long!"

He did not answer her; he was not inclined for speech: he still was absorbed by the consciousness of a danger, the oppression of a suffering, of which she had no knowledge.

She asked at length, as drowsiness overcame her, "Does it matter if I fall asleep?"

And he answered, "Sleep, child, if you can; you are safe; and I will keep you warm."

Her long wandering and waiting had made her weary, so that now, in the warmth of his arms, wrapped about by his cloak, with all anxiety gone from her, she fell gradually into slumber. Even the shrill signal-whistle, which from time to time he uttered as a guide to those seeking them, did not arouse her.

The dog had failed to follow Henry Dilworth in his steep descent, and he now hoped that the animal had turned homewards, and might lead the other seekers here. But as the time passed on the chilliness increased. He put his hand on Kate's, and fancied that it was getting colder. He had already felt it to be a hard thing that the strength which had been his for so many years should fail him at the first moment when he needed it for his own child's help; now it was harder to imagine what the cost of this failure might be.

The health which made her so beautiful and happy, which had shone in her eyes and glowed in her cheeks, might be lost, wasted, thrown away by one night's error on her part and weakness on his. The thought of it was intolerable to him. He was resolved to save her from injury at any cost. Gently lifting her head, he pushed the sleeve of his coat from the arm supporting her, and then slipped it off altogether, to wrap it round his daughter instead.

She moved a little, murmured, "What is it? Will they come soon?" and fell asleep again without waiting for any answer.

If it had been cold before, it was colder now to Henry Dilworth. The mist soaked through his shirt-sleeves, and chilled his limbs to numbness. The oppression and difficulty of breathing from which he was suffering increased. Mechanically he felt in his pocket for the flask from which he had made Kate drink. It contained

brandy and water, mixed with a few drops of opium. He had taken such a draught more than once as a remedy for certain painful symptoms. And he had never needed it so much as now, when the brandy would warm his limbs and stimulate his exhausted strength; the opium would soothe and relieve his suffering and depression. He took the cork from the flask, and raised it to his lips, but before he had tasted it he remembered that Kate might awake cold and exhausted, and need the very draught he was taking.

If the mist remained on the mountain, and the seekers took other directions, many hours might still pass away before help came. Kate's strength would fail, and no care that he could take of her would be enough to keep from her limbs the deadly chill of that fatal mist. It was even possible that when morning came she might have to find her way from the mountain alone. In such a case the draught he held in his fingers was the one help he could



insure to her, the one thing which might be left to revive and save her.

He put the cork in its place again carefully, felt for his daughter's hand, and laid the bottle in it.

"Kate, dear child," he said, speaking very distinctly, as if he wished to impress every word on her mind, "put this bottle in your pocket. It is brandy and water, what you had before. Drink the rest when you feel cold."

Her fingers closed drowsily over it. She felt for her pocket mechanically, and put the bottle in. When he repeated his words, and said, "Do you understand, Kate? Drink the rest when you feel cold," she answered dreamily, "Yes, I am to drink it when I feel cold;" but, wrapped in the warmth of a happy sleep, she did not raise her head to look round, or try to understand the reason of the instruction he had given to her. She was content to obey, and leave the rest to him. She moved her head sleepily against his shoulder, felt for

his hand, and clasped it. Its coldness did not arouse her; nor, dreaming happily of a life in the future with him, did she notice that from that moment his signal-whistle was never repeated.

She woke when the mists were thinning and the dawn was breaking. A vague sense of terror and distress was upon her; the cold had penetrated to her limbs, and a nightmare dream had succeeded the happy slumber of the hours before. There was the sound of a barking dog near her, voices, and footsteps.

Forgetting where she was, and still in the perplexity of sleep, she sprang to her feet in answer to Jack's cry of "Kate!"

"Oh, Jack! you have come at last! How long I have waited!"

The pain in her ankle recalled her to a distincter memory of the circumstances around her. She leaned against the rock, and turned towards her father.

"He found me," she said; "he carried me here. Father!—" She stopped sud-

denly, with a startled look, and eyes that dilated in a great terror.

"Why doesn't he speak? Why doesn't he look? Is he asleep? Oh, Jack! it cannot be that he is ill!"

One of the men had gone forward to the place where Henry Dilworth still sat, his back against the wall of rock, his head a little forward with the chin resting against his chest. The guide lifted one motionless arm, and let it fall again. Then he glanced at Kate, and made an apologetic gesture to Jack, as if an unpleasant duty had been put upon him, and said distinctly enough, but in a low voice:

"It's all over. We can do nothing here."

And Kate, flinging herself on her knees beside him, looked into her father's face, and knew that her love had been given too late.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SUPPLEMENTARY.

So ended Henry Dilworth's life-story. The strong swimmer, who had breasted the fiercer currents of life with courage and success, died worn out at last in those shallow waters of social existence where his best qualities seemed to avail him nothing. His own generosity betrayed him, and his own tenderness defeated him. The unselfishness of his nature combined with the prejudices of others to his undoing. For all his love and patience he had only that reward which the world and its children offer freely and fully to their best benefactors—permission and opportunity to make his self-sacrifice complete.

He was buried beside his wife in the graveyard at Elmdale, and a marble tablet

was put up to his honour in the little church there. It was Miss Leake who suggested the tablet, and who found money for a memorial window in the chancel. Kate was absorbed in the thought of another sort of monument to his memory.

The tablet related his discoveries in geography and natural history; it spoke of him as one who had forwarded the cause of science and civilization throughout a long and devoted life, and who was an honour to his age and his country.

Kate made only one objection to the inscription on the tablet as first proposed. She admitted that the letters which signified his fellowship in various learned societies ought to follow his name, but she would not consent that they should be preceded by the title of Esquire.

“He owed nothing to his position, everything to himself. Do not let us try to remember him except just as he was,” Kate pleaded; and Jack—the perfidious

Jack, to whom Miss Leake appealed for support—upheld the younger woman's opinion on this as on every subject.

A friendly truce had followed the lovers' quarrel. It was not referred to after Henry Dilworth's death, and Kate, stunned by her great loss, overwhelmed by remorse and loneliness, had no thought to give to questions of love and marriage. She accepted silently Jack's friendly help and sympathy, and made no allusion to past relations; while Jack, on his side, was strangely humble and obliging. He rode miles on her errands, he wrote letters for her, he hunted up books that she required from the libraries of his friends, or bought them himself regardless of cost; he showed himself ready to beg, borrow, perhaps to steal, certainly to work and spend, on her behalf.

For Kate was engaged on a great task, one which seemed to her almost sacred. She was going carefully through all her father's notes and manuscripts, and pre-

paring them for publication. She knew that it had been his intention to give to the world a summary of his labours and discoveries; he had amassed ample material, but he had perpetually put off the literary part of the work, which part was the most uncongenial to him. He had always hoped for his daughter's help in the revision of these papers, and now Kate worked at them alone, feeling this the only thing left to do for him. She would have liked much better to devote herself to his personal life; but it was too late for that; with her own hands she had cut away all hope of that special privilege for which she had always longed; she could no longer contribute to her father's happiness; she must be content only to finish his work.

She set herself to the task with the strong zeal of one who has suddenly come face to face with a great grief, and can only escape its terrible gaze by an averted look, fixed on a continual labour. She read; she studied; she made notes; she

used numberless books of reference ; Jack helping her and advising her in all. She knew that she was, in comparison with her father, ignorant and incompetent ; but she felt that the strength of her love and determination might enable her to make a more worthy memorial of him than would have been produced by indifferent though more experienced hands.

Jack Langford was bold beyond reason in his efforts to help her. He borrowed from strangers, if necessary, books which he could not buy ; he wrote to authorities, and inspected museums on her behalf. He took an immense amount of trouble only to verify a statement or elucidate a doubtful passage in the manuscript. A journey to London was treated by him as a trifle in those days, and he was ready to spend any amount of time in turning over folios and studying specimens in the British Museum.

When the work was finished, Jack encouraged Kate to submit it for correc-



tion to a scientific authority who had been a correspondent of her father's.

"I'd write myself and ask him to edit it," said Jack—who had, indeed, written on her behalf a number of letters which might have been looked upon as calmly impertinent if they had not for the most part been generously responded to—"but he'll pay twice the attention to a request from yourself."

The scientific authority proved to be a sympathetic and obliging person; and so the book was well corrected; some useful notes were added; and—with an appreciative preface from the authority—the book went through the press.

Then Kate's task was done. She did not desire fame for her father, nor even full acknowledgment of his work from the world; she only wished to save that work from being wasted and lost for want of the necessary final labour.

The first review of the book which appeared spoke respectfully of the

character and achievements of Henry Dilworth, and approvingly of the manner in which his memorials had been edited and prepared for publication.

Miss Leake was delighted when it was put into her hands; her niece's recent labours were excused, and her own account of her brother-in-law's genius for ever justified to her little world. She read the review aloud to her sister Anna, quoted from it, wrongly, when occasion offered, mentioned it to her friends, and felt it to be a satisfactory thing altogether.

"Not that Kate has anything of a literary tendency—not at all," she thought it necessary to explain; "but the dear girl was so fond of her father, and so proud of him—naturally—that she would make any effort for his sake. And Mr. Langford has been so very good in assisting her, looking up references and so on. Otherwise I never would have consented to the thing; it was so much

for her to do ; but it has helped to divert her mind from her great trouble. So sudden it was, so unexpected, just when he had returned to England, and she was looking forward to seeing more of him than she had ever done before. He was a martyr to science, literally. Of course it was the exposure on the mountain which gave the last strain to his health ; but it had been ruined before that by his work abroad. He had a splendid constitution, but he endured all sorts of hardships in his pursuit of knowledge. He would have lived twenty years longer if he could have been induced to settle down quietly and take care of himself."

Thus Miss Leake discoursed to a friend in the drawing-room at the Stepping Stones on the day after the review had appeared, while Kate sat, weary and sad, in the little room which was a library or breakfast-room as circumstances required.

The sadness which comes after the ending of a task and with the sense of its insufficiency, weighed upon her; there was, besides, a feeling of the blankness and aimlessness which dulled the interest of the future.

She had read the review, and sighed in reading it. Why had she worked for her father too late to win his approbation? Why had she not used her powers early enough to brighten his life of lonely effort? She leaned back in a low chair, and gazed into the flickering firelight, too listless to rouse herself to any occupation.

The door opened, and Jack came in, looked round the room, and seemed disappointed; then he caught sight of her in a shadowy corner, closed the door behind him, and came forward with a glance of satisfaction.

“Tired, Kate?”

“I have done nothing to make me so.”

“That may be. How glad I am to find

you alone! It was sensible of you to sit here by yourself."

He drew a chair close to the fire, and sat down. Then he said, "The old ladies are talking about this review. Does it make you glad, Kate?"

He gazed hard at her as she leaned back in the shadow, changed a little from the proud and handsome girl of a year ago. She looked prouder, perhaps; but her manner was conspicuously gentle, and her eyes took a wistful expression when they turned to Jack. She was still dressed in deep mourning, though she had expressed scorn for it when first told to put it on.

"Why should I wear black for a man I was never allowed to see? who was not thought good enough for me to live with?" she had asked then; but the bitterness of her first sorrow had now passed away.

"I don't know," she answered; "it wasn't for that sort of thing that I cared

to do it. It was that his work should be finished, not that people should praise it, that I cared. What's the good of praise? He will never know. But the work was what he *meant* to do; it was part of himself." Then her face softened, and the warmth of a smile found its way across to Jack's watching eyes.

"You have been very good to me," she said; "and I thank you very much indeed."

"And dismiss me as done with?" he said inquiringly.

"Oh, Jack, how can you?" she protested with a little laugh.

"But is it so, or is it not so, Kate? I want to know," he persisted.

"Why should I dismiss you?"

"Why, indeed? I see no valid reason; and every reason why I should stay. At least the reason of my own wish, which is sufficient for me—not for you, perhaps?"

"Why do you talk so?"

"Because I have waited long enough. You had no room for me in your mind some months ago, and I kept out of your sight—mentally, I mean. Now I want to come back; it is time. Don't you like me a little, Kate? Will you throw away another happiness?"

"Is it another happiness? You are young; you may find some one else. Why should you care?"

"I *won't* find any one else. And you are young too. You have a long life before you probably; do you want it to be empty and bleak because you have made one mistake and lost one chance?"

"It wasn't for myself I cared."

"But you will have to care for yourself as time goes on. And I can't help caring for you throughout everything."

"But, Jack, you said you didn't."

"Kate," he answered with an air of serious reproof, "don't pretend that you were so simple as to believe me."

She blushed at his look as much as his

words, and answered deprecatingly, "I didn't think of it; why should I? You had said so."

"Think of it now, then. You know I love you."

"Oh, Jack!"

"Is the phrase too strong? Well, then, I have a faint liking for you, the smallest suspicion of an admiration. Haven't you anything in return for me?"

He had leaned forward, and taken her hand, which trembled a little without endeavouring to retreat.

"Think of it, Katie," he said persuasively; "why shouldn't we live together, and be as happy as we can?"

"But I am not—nice. You know I am not."

"Who said you were nice? and who wanted you to be nice?" he demanded.

He had drawn his chair nearer to hers, and put his arm loosely and, as it were, tentatively about her. "I never said I did, Kate."



She looked down at her own white fingers, which moved restlessly in his hand ; and she said softly, " I do like you a little, Jack ; but I don't think I should like to marry you, if that's what you mean."

" I wouldn't be so unreasonable as to ask you to like it, if only you would *do* it," he said ; " couldn't you manage to think of it—dear ? "

She drew a long breath as he uttered the word softly. Something in her own heart answered to his tenderness. She tried to glance at him, but her eyes fell. His head bent nearer to hers, and he said :

" Katie, darling ! "

" Yes, Jack ? "

She glanced at him timidly, interrogatively ; and this time his eyes held hers, so that they were not withdrawn.

" Don't you love me, Katie ? "

" Oh, Jack ! do you think I do ? "

Her doubt seemed to him a sufficient certainty, and he took the question as answered in his favour.

"You won't mind it so much when you are used to it; it isn't so bad after all—my being so fond of you, I mean," he apologized.

"Oh, Jack, how strange you are!" she laughed softly, as she leaned back in her chair, having received his first caress with a discretion which showed by nothing, except a heightened colour, what a new and strange experience it was to her.

"And suppose that, after all, I should spoil your life—as my father's was spoiled?"

"I'll take my chance," he answered.

"At least," she said, "you know all my faults beforehand."

"Did I ever say so? Then I was an impertinent fool. You haven't any faults; you are simply perfect."

She looked at him in amazement and began to protest.

"How can you speak so, and expect me to believe you? Do you think people

can't be fond of each other without telling—lies?"

"Fond of each other, pooh! What an expression! I was fond of you years ago, before I had any idea what a delicious creature you are to know properly, before—if you don't mind my mentioning it—I had kissed you."

"It wasn't necessary to mention it," Kate observed.

"Now I am madly, foolishly—no, I should say, wisely, discreetly, deliciously, admirably—in love with you. Even those amended expressions are absurdly inadequate and inappropriate—don't you think so?"

"I can't say," Kate answered with meekness; "perhaps I don't feel quite—like that."

"Don't you? Poor darling! Do I get all the good of it? and do you only submit in order to make me happy?"

She turned to him then, with a tear-brightened tenderness shining in her eyes.

"No, Jack, it isn't so ; and never was ; and never will be. You always did me good and made me love you ; yes, though I said you didn't, and thought I couldn't. If," she said, dropping her voice and her eyes at the same moment, "you had gone away as I told you, and left me, what a miserable creature I should have been !"

Then the door opened and Miss Leake came into the room, expressing some astonishment to find Mr. Langford there, and the candles not lighted, only the firelight shining ruddily into the darkness.

Jack sprang up to meet her, however, with a cordial greeting, and concealing his regret that her friend had not stayed longer, he cut short her exclamations and apologies.

"It's all right, Miss Leake ; Kate won't be an anxiety to you any more. I know how difficult she is to deal with ; and I am going to take her off your hands altogether. She's agreed to it at last."

"Kate never *was* an anxiety to me," Miss Leake replied with dignity, "and if you mean that she has consented to marry you, I am perfectly satisfied, of course ; I said so before when you asked me ; but I shall miss her *very much* when she goes."

This marriage was an event which she had desired for two years at least ; both her hearers were aware of it, and she knew that they were ; but what did that matter when the proper thing had to be said ?

Whether Jack and Kate lived happily ever afterwards is a question beyond the limits of this story ; they had in their hands the best materials for the production of happiness. They suited one another and loved one another ; they possessed health, good intentions, and a sufficiency of money.

Jack always declared that his wife had a delicious disposition to live with ; he was very proud of her, while she was loving and grateful to him. He used to observe with

seriousness that she made him a very obedient wife ; and there was more truth in the statement than would have been imagined by an outsider who remarked only the haughty beauty of the one, and the careless good-nature of the other.

Kate's children were taught to be proud of their descent from Henry Dilworth. He was a hero whose story nourished their admiration of the heroic, and fed their love of the unselfish. He had been able to give little to his daughter in his lifetime, but at least he bequeathed to his descendants and hers no trivial example, no inherited meannesses, no darkened ideals. His life had been lonely, his love unsatisfied ; but his was a link in a chain of lives, and the link was strong and pure. The influence of his character reached beyond the term of his own existence, and helped those who loved more happily to love unselfishly too. His public life—the relation which he bore to the general human community—had never been useless or ignoble ; and his private life,

forlorn in the living of it, could not be regarded as devoid of noble issues.

In this world, where the human race grows slowly—if it grows at all—to lofty ideals; in this so-called civilized society, where we struggle with sins and sicknesses of every sort; with faults which private interest engenders in us; with temptations which our neighbours' example commends to us, and vices that we have inherited from our parents; in this strange sequence of generations, where the baby dies of its mother's disease, and the infant is born to a heritage of its father's faults; no life that is pure, simple, and honestly laborious can be regarded as insignificant. Is not all humanity indebted to every man who holds his own as its representative, and does not yield to a crowd of deteriorating influences? May not generations yet unborn trace back to such a one their health and their virtue? Will not the society that ignored him survive only by the force of his merit and that of his fellows? Such a man may

have had a sad life, a lonely life, a disappointed life: was it, then, a failure?

He had what he chose—the power to work well and live nobly; and the rest of this world's good things slipped easily away to the ignoble.

THE END.



# THE GARDEN AT MONKHOLME.

By ANNIE ARMITT,

AUTHOR OF "IN SHALLOW WATERS," ETC.

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## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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### Athenæum.

"Truly excellent, in power of analysis and interest, is 'The Garden at Monkholme.' The plot, though it faintly reminds one of 'Enoch Arden,' is in reality not at all the same. There are a quiet power and pathos about the tale which are attractive."

### Saturday Review.

"Critics who measure their words and do not care to seem carried away without good cause, use the word 'power' with a sense of venture and responsibility. Nor would it seem to the reader from the quiet tenor of the early part of the story that it could be applied to 'The Garden at Monkholme,' but with the third volume there comes a situation which needs power, and the Author shows herself equal to it. . . . The Author shows herself a student and close observer of human nature, as seen in temper, manner, and conduct. These supply her motives, and to show these she has devised and regulated her plot. . . . The heroine may be supposed to represent the Author's ideal of womanly manner and character; she has sweetness, tenderness, and grace, all guarded by courage, firmness, and self-respect when rare occasions demand them. It is something in these days to have a woman made interesting through simple feminine qualities; because she is gentle, amiable, conscientious, innocently solicitous to please, and free from self-consciousness in doing so; with no gifts or charms that demand a distinct sphere for themselves, whose charm, indeed, is harmony of being; who is occupied with others, and with making their life as far as she can cheerful and happy: who receives the good things about her in simple thankfulness, not intent on divesting herself of them for the sake of others, but endeavouring to make everybody who comes within their influence the better for them. . . . We have not touched on the passion and tragic elements of the story . . . we will not deprive the reader of the interest of scenes delineated with real power. One parting commendation we must give to the Author's style, which is clear, simple, and correct. Words well chosen always give weight to thought, and are themselves a voucher for seriousness and truth of intention."

**Scotsman.**

"A Novel of exceptional merit and charm. . . . Such is the theme which Miss Armitt develops with much grace and tenderness of style, and with a finish and delicacy in the treatment of detail that are very enjoyable. The book is one to read slowly and think over, and of which many readers will long retain a tender recollection."

**Standard.**

"A very good story."

**Sunday Times.**

"As regards both construction and conception, 'The Garden at Monkholme' is a delightful novel. . . . There is a quaint and indescribable charm about the book, which makes the reader loth to quit the scenes it pictures. . . . The book does not fail to be absorbing in interest. The one great scene to which the whole action leads up is intensely dramatic, and the reader is surprised to find how strongly his feelings have been excited by the fictitious characters whose fortunes he has been following."

**Spectator.**

"The four children in the garden are very distinct, picturesque little personages, whom it is pleasant to read about. Violet, the heroine, as she grows to womanhood, is made to develop with a consistency which novelists do not always contrive to maintain. Redfern Hilborough is also skilfully presented."

**Graphic.**

"This is an original and very thoughtful and clever story which it is a genuine pleasure to read."

**Public Opinion.**

"One cannot read two pages of this Novel without perceiving those welcome characteristics which betoken the presence in it of spirit and originality."

**Salford Weekly News.**

"We advise those who love the manners of an English lady truthfully delineated, to turn to this book. . . . Our interest is kept up throughout."

**John Bull.**

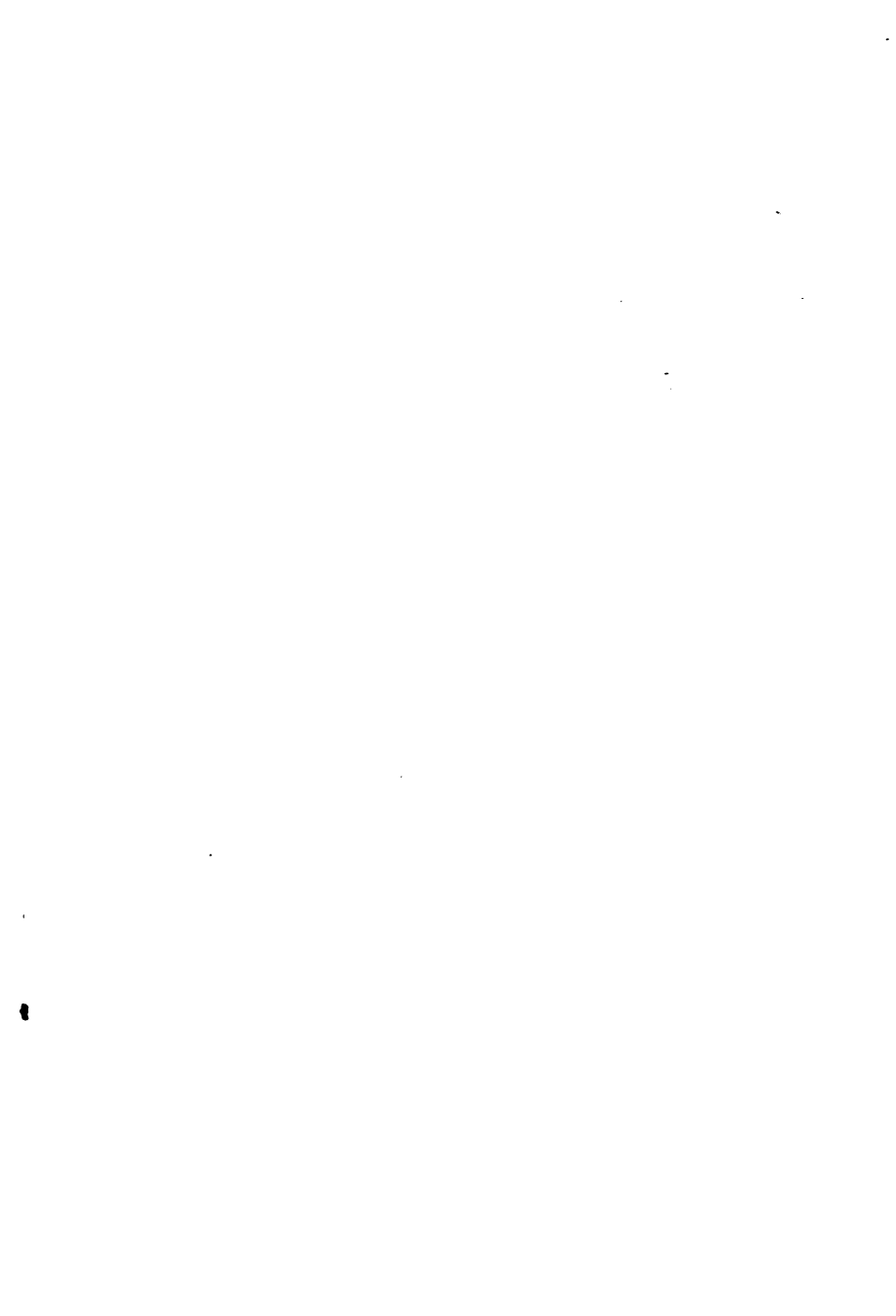
"There is a good deal in it which is clever and attractive."

**Manchester City News.**

"A work of striking merit."

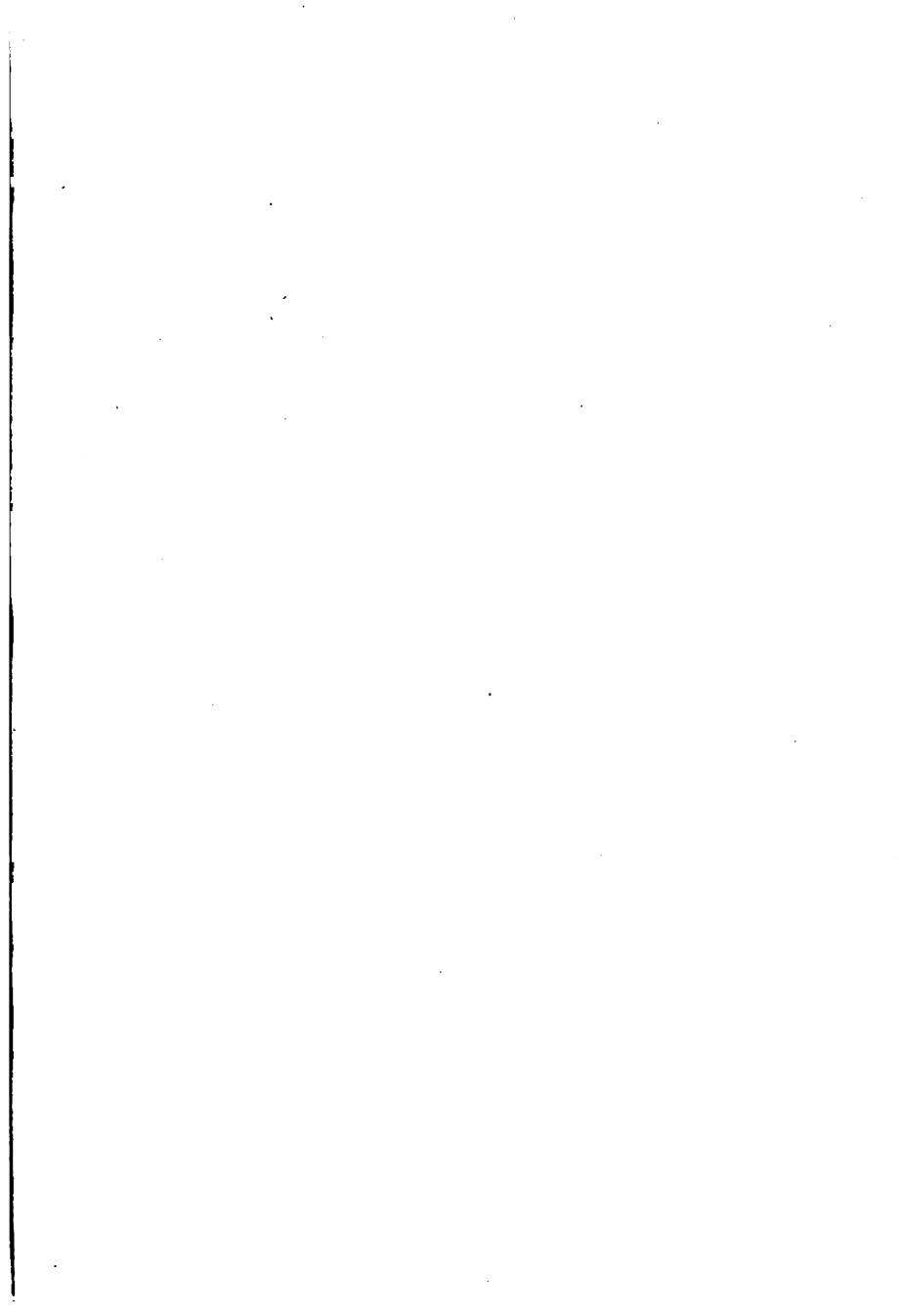
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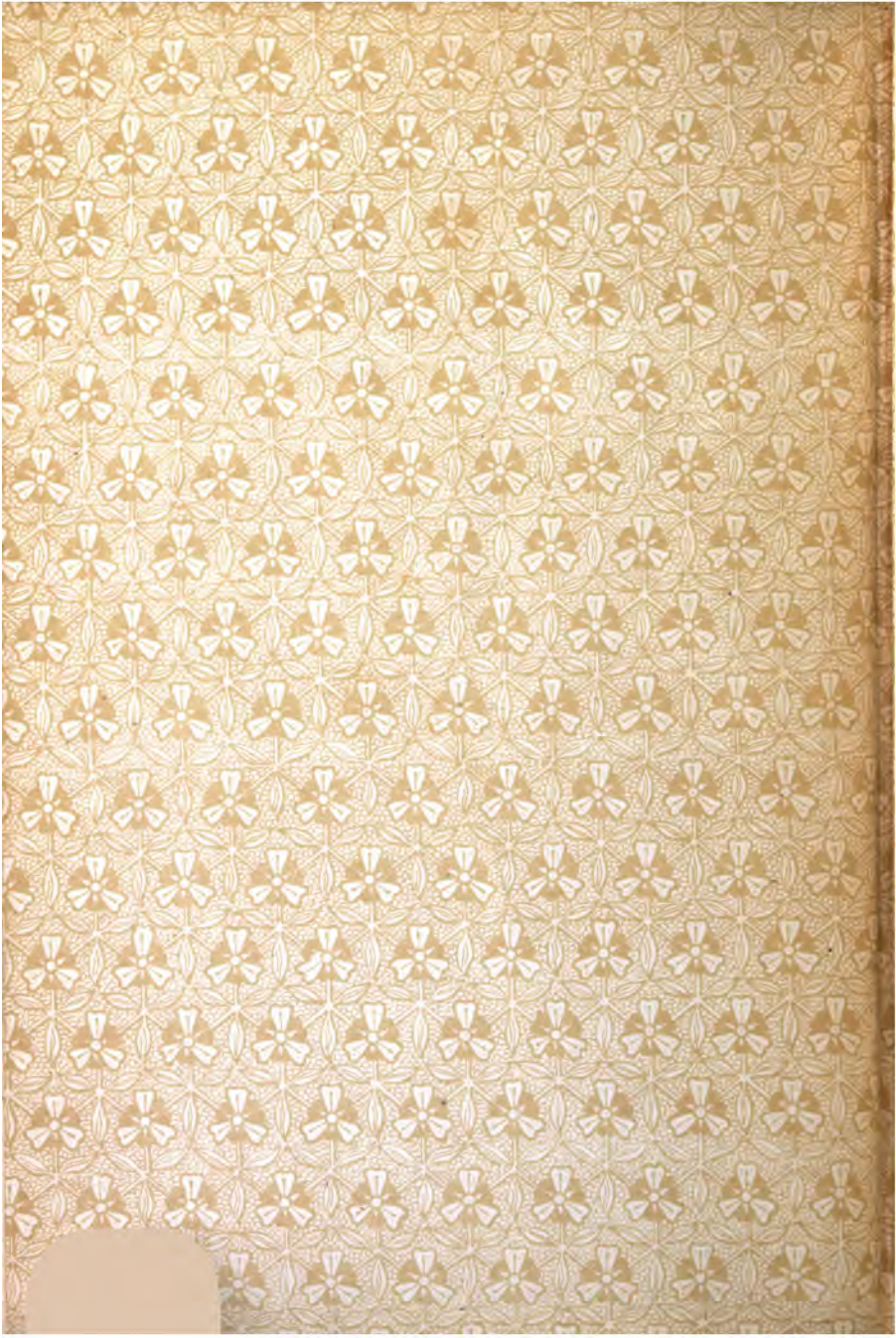
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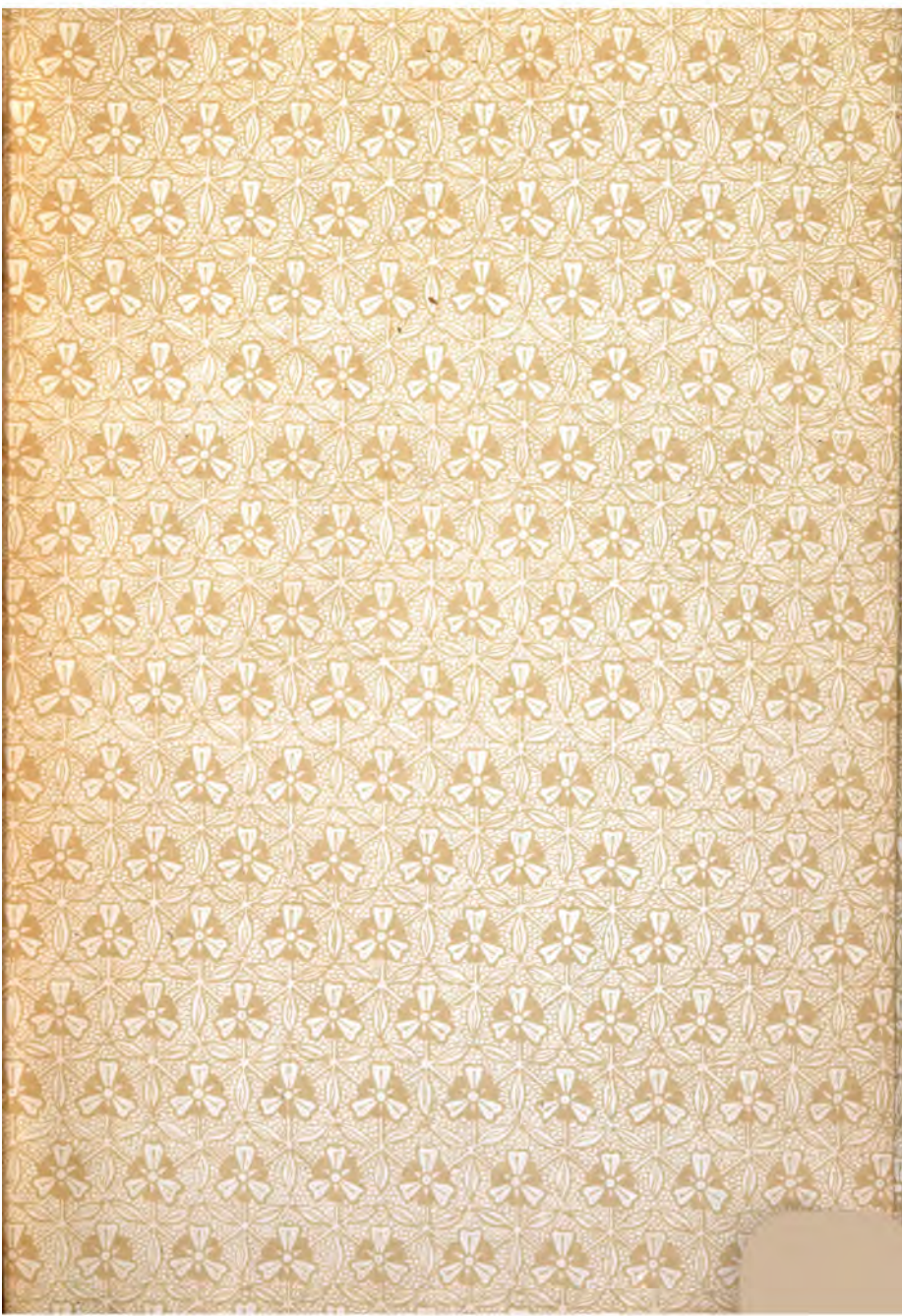
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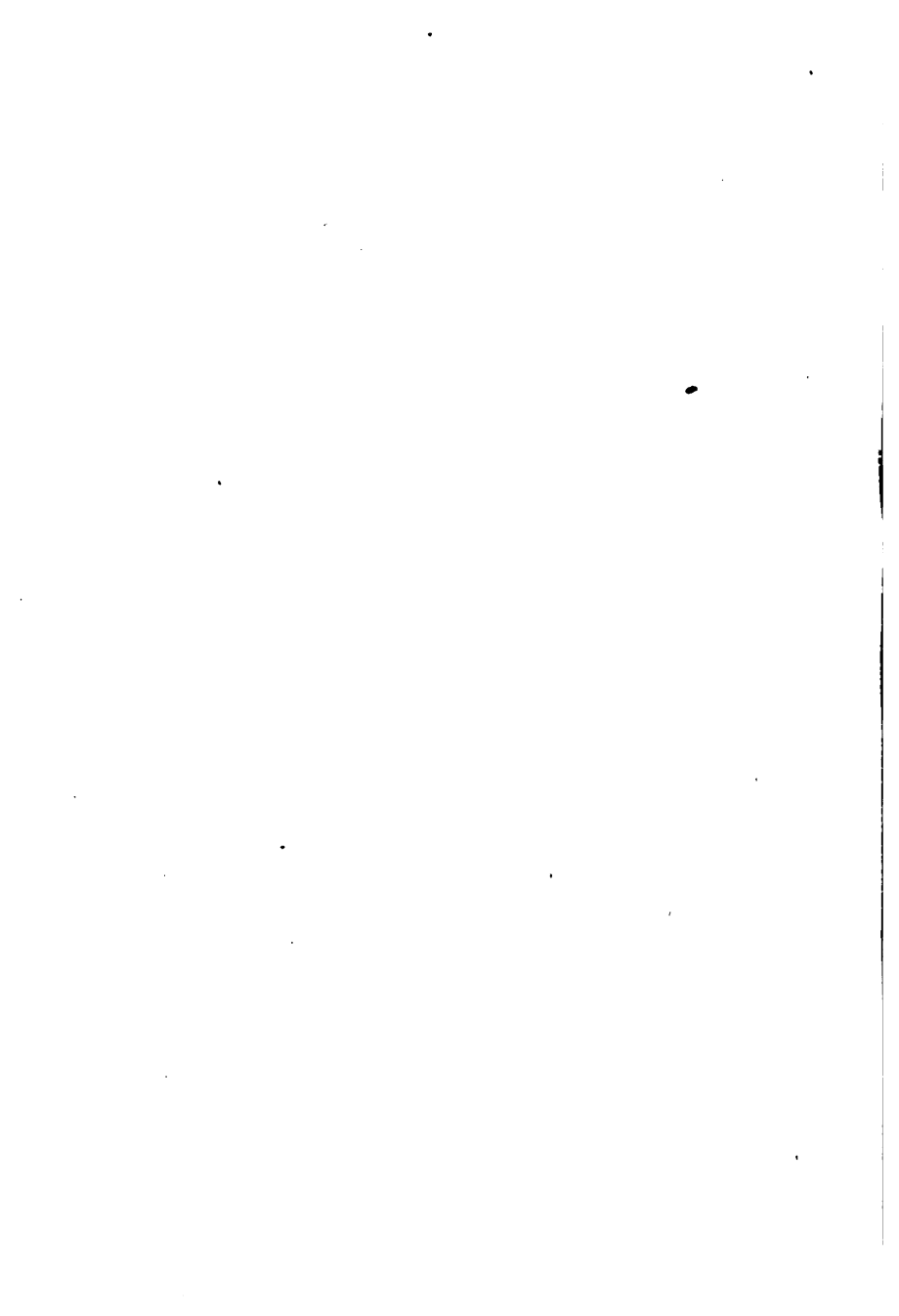


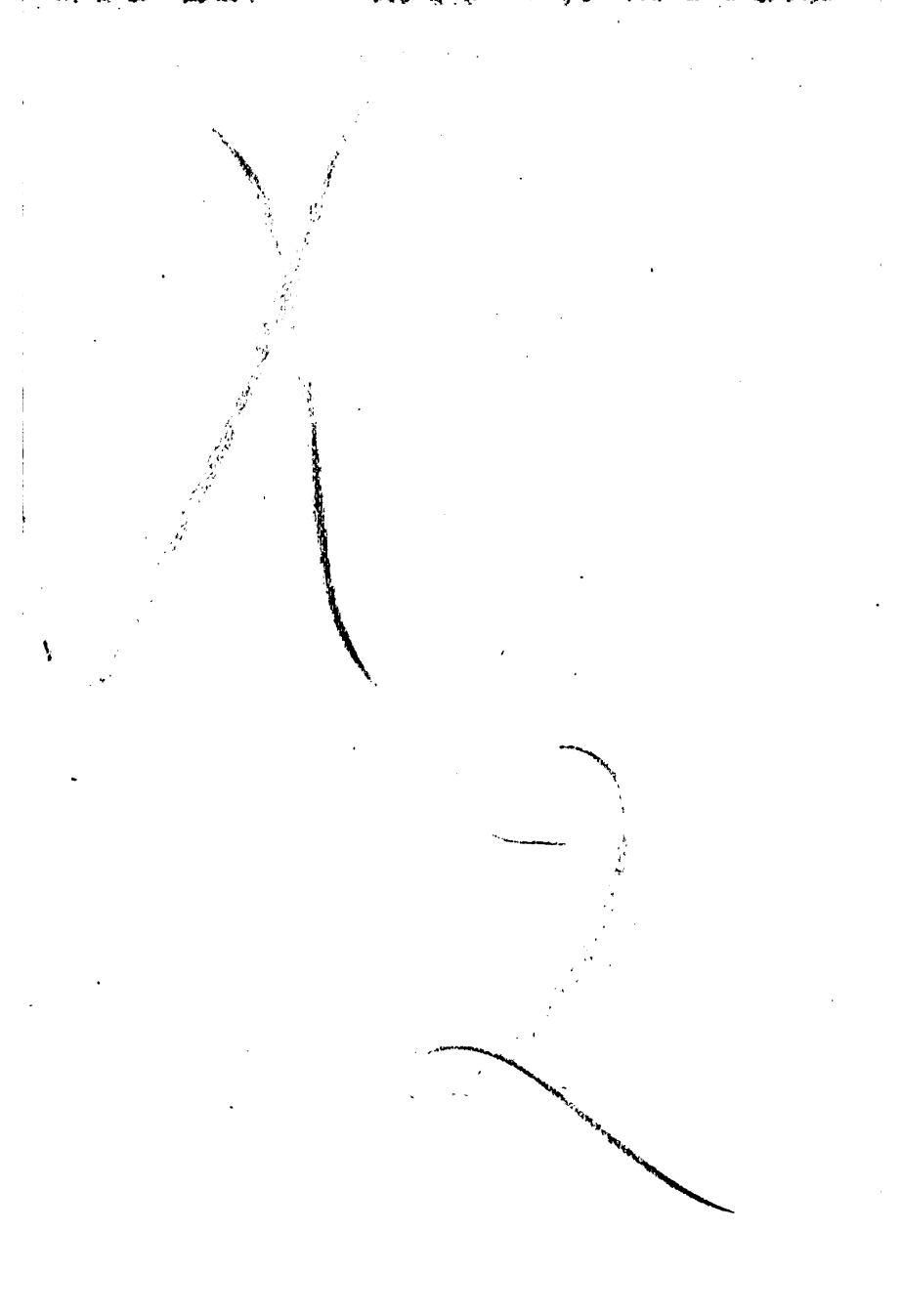












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